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*Benjamin Nath Lewis*

# THE LIFE OF BENOYENDRA NATH SEN

BY  
SURENDRA NATH DUTT

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# THE LIFE OF BENOYENDRA NATH SEN

## PREFACE.

"This search after great men," says Emerson, "is the dream of youth and the most serious occupation of manhood." Nothing gives us so much pleasure, nothing is so wholesome as to find out the hidden depths of a hero soul. Therefore it is that we dive into old records with the accumulated dust of centuries, therefore we toil and moil noting down events, jotting down anecdotes that help us to write the biography of a great man.

Difficulties meet us at every step to clear what is mysterious, want of proper materials thwarts us in our attempt to portray the real man.

But whence would man draw strength and gather courage to fight out the battle of life which is really a very serious business if we are to live like men, and if we really feel the responsibility of a man?

The whole world is upheld by the veracity of good and great men; they make the earth wholesome. So they, who come in contact with great souls, find life happy and fruitful. Life is sweet and tolerable only in our belief in such society.

Thus we see myriads of souls are carried aloft as if on the wings of a bird to undreamt-of heights by the influence of the life and character of a great man. How interesting, therefore, is a biography! How inexpressibly comfortable it is to know a great man, to see into him, to understand his goings forth, to decipher the whole heart of his mystery and to view the world altogether as he views it.

We have attempted to write the life of such a man with difficulties sometimes insurmountable to gather the necessary facts and to collect materials to build it up. The friends and admirers of the man have all contributed in completing a life so unique and so very spiritual in these days of gross worldliness and materialism.

Simple and unostentatious in his habits he never tried to give publicity to his doings, hence it is that he has himself too left for us no record of his life, but the man himself is greater than all his works, hence it has been our intention to depict him as best as we can by the light he shed around him, by the work he did for the advancement of humanity.

It has been my attempt in these pages to draw out the real man as my friend was. There is no stirring event to record, no romantic adventure to relate, but his life passed in uniform tranquility. His life was a life of growth and progress, as I have tried to show. It was a steady growth rising step above step, higher and higher in the scale of spiritual perfection. The aim of every biography is to bring out the real spirit of the man and the detailed events of his life are so far important as they help us to know the real man. The growth of such a spiritual man in these days of unbelief ought to be an object lesson to all. In the midst of all the hurry and worry of life, it is refreshing to turn to such a spiritually-minded soul for our comfort and guidance. If our young men of the present time would follow in the footsteps of Benoyendranath, would look up to him as their ideal and would imitate him in the formation of a pure character and genuine manliness, then the regeneration of our country will not be far distant. I shall think myself amply rewarded for my labour, if I have succeeded in picturing the true spiritual man as he was to my readers.

More in earnest than in jest often did I tell my dear departed friend Benoyendra that I would be his biographer. The reason for which I said so is not far to seek, for there was something not easily to be defined or described in him that charmed me and also unmistakable signs of greatness were seen in him from his very infancy. Benoy, of course, would laugh at it, thinking it merely a jest and would not like Dr. Johnson wish to take the life of his biographer. He was always modesty personified, so he could never think of his being a great man even if the idea were thrust upon him by somebody with a view to be his biographer. I would watch the minute details of his life and I was in his young age his constant companion. The love I bore him was of a singular and peculiar type; it was a kind of Boswellism, yet something very far from it, so I cannot very well define it.

Not a day passed without my seeing him and talking with him. If I were ill for a day or two I would wish to be cured soon that I might have the pleasure of enjoying his sweet companionship. There was such a charm in him that so long as I was with him I felt a thrilling sensation of joy till my whole soul was transformed into a purer and nobler being. This was even so when I was grown up. Even if I saw him for an hour or two after days and months had passed away, for I was not much in touch with him in later years, I would think myself a new man fired with nobler aspirations and higher ideals. The world with its many cares and anxieties, sorrows and trials melted away into infinite space like mist before the rising sun, and all other thoughts were merged and forgotten in that sweet ethereal presence. He appeared to me a man of some superior order and intelligence, cheering and elevating all he came across, with a halo of spiritual glory



around him and I thought myself a pigmy before a giant. Such was the charm of his companionship, such was his force of character and every one who at that time came in contact with him might have felt the same thrilling sensation of delight as I felt or why would young men always swarm around him as if he was the very soul of their circle, and without him nothing could be accomplished. We feel a new interest in a man when he has passed away and especially so when the man is noble, good and great. When such a soul has passed away, the world turns at his departure with quite a peculiar earnestness and seriously asks itself the question what was the purpose and character of his presence here and how far was he successful in performing his God-given mission? Hence we feel the necessity of a good biography which would present before the world the true inner man.

CALCUTTA,        )  
January, 1928.    |

SURENDRA NATH DUTT.

## CHAPTER I.

### HIS TIME AND ENVIRONMENTS.

It is of the first importance when writing the biography of any man to describe his environments, the circumstances and times in which he lived and flourished. Taken care of by the tenderest and most loving and the most virtuous of parents, surrounded by the affection of the most gentle and affectionate of brothers and sisters, loved and sympathised with by all friends, actuated by one great aim of life, namely, the culture and glorification of the immortal spirit within, Benoyendra grew up. The time in which he flourished was a period of transition in every sphere of life. The light of western education has dispelled the darkness of ignorance and superstition of ages under whose yoke the country groaned for centuries past. The culture of the science of the west has freed the Indians from the tyranny of antiquity. A new life seems to pulsate everywhere, a new feeling seems to inspire all. As we reap the plenty harvest of western science and civilisation, literature and culture, yet there is a dark side of the picture, the most gloomy that can agitate the breast of a patriot. This is the Godless education of the west. Cast adrift from the safe moorings of a fixed faith of our forefathers the minds of men are tossed about by tremendous doubts and obstinate questionings, till at last scepticism and agnosticism with wide gaping mouths seem to devour us all. The age in which we live is not an heroic, devotional, philosophical, or moral age but a mechanical one. Carlyle writes most significantly thus of the age: "Instruction, that mysterious communing of

wisdom with ignorance is no longer an indefinable tentative process, requiring a study of individual aptitudes, and a perpetual variation of means and methods to attain the same end, but a secure straightforward business, to be conducted in the gross, by proper mechanism, with such intellect as comes to hand." Men are grown mechanical in head and in heart, as well as in hand. It is admitted on all sides that the metaphysical and moral sciences are falling into decay, while the physical are engaging every day more and more of our attention. The whole metaphysics itself from Locke downwards is not a spiritual philosophy but a material one. There is no philosopher, now a days, like a Socrates or a Plato to inculcate the infinite worth of religion, the great truth that our happiness depends on the mind within and not on external circumstances. The world has ever been made great not by mechanical contrivances but by dynamical ones *i.e.*, by making use of the inward primary powers of men. Science and art, poetry and philosophy have all been the free gifts of nature. The divine spirit of religion rises in the mystic depths of the human soul and flies like hallowed fire from heart to heart purifying and illuminating all. Religion is no longer a thousand-voiced psalm from the heart of man to his Maker, the fountain of all goodness, beauty and truth, but a wise, prudential calculation of profit and loss grounded on economy and utility. The tendency of the age is purely materialistic and, as Professor Blackie says, the madness of externalism. Our education has degraded to bread and butter studies. The truth is, we have lost sight of the only aim of this precious human life—man with an immortal spirit, man in the image of his Maker—namely, culture and advancement of the spirit within through moral perfection and religious training.

If India is ever destined to take her place among the nations of the earth, if India is again to gain back her lost glorious position, as the Niobe of nations, if ever she be called upon to rise up to that exalted position she occupied in the past as the light to show path to all other nations of the world, then she must do it again by her spiritual advancement. India is pre-eminently the land of spiritual culture, her sons were great only through their spirituality. Her Himalayas with heads crowned with eternal snow, her deep forests, her rivers like oceans of liquid silver, still give proof of her deep spirituality.

Such was the condition of the country when Benoyendra grew up and his heart bled to see her condition. Men do not believe in the existence of a human soul, it has become synonymous with stomach or some fine chemical salt, as Carlyle significantly calls it. As Voltaire and his friends called religion a superfluity and a nuisance, so we care not much for religion, think it not worth our while to devote our time and attention to it. The torch kindled by the light of western science has really helped to clear the jungles of superstition, but now in its place there is an arid desert with no verdure to cheer the spirit up. Thus fares our country. The great religious leader Keshub Chunder saw this onslaught of Europe's haughty civilisation and cried "Europe, desist, you have carried this warfare too far"; where will men find rest and peace if there be no religion, how will men bear the cross of life if there be no God to give us strength, how to suffer the various ills of life if we lose faith in life eternal? All these my friend felt. Though brought up in such a time when materialism thus ran rampant and was making a dire havoc of the cherished institutions of the country, yet his soul was not in the least touched by these but nurtured in the lap of religion, guided by an

ideal before him, he was true to his Asiatic instinct. With all his western culture he was truly an Asiatic, given to religious thoughts and meditations from his earliest dawn of consciousness.

"A harmonious development of being" says Carlyle "is the first and last object of true culture." This was surely obtained in the life of my friend. I have never seen in my life such a harmonious development and growth. As he grew in wisdom so he grew in purity and love. Oh! what a loving heart he had! He felt for all, he prayed for all and I can express it no better than in the lines of Goldsmith:

"As a bird each fond endearment tries,  
"To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the sky,  
"He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,  
"Allured to brighter worlds, and himself led the way."

A lover of truth he was yet kind and tender, just yet forgiving, a strict maintainer of principle, yet not harsh or opinionative. Thus all the noble virtues that make man an angel, that go to make a man God on this earth, were blended in sweet harmony in his nature. Vainly do we seek for another such in the world of vice and selfishness. Simultaneously with the culture of intellect he tried to rise higher and higher in the scale of spiritual perfection. Intellectual culture was to him only a means to an end, but all his efforts and struggles, his hankerings and energies were for spiritual growth. And well might one say in justice to his sacred memory that he attained what he aspired after and gained that for which he had struggled and tried. His sweet face is for ever hidden under a veil, never to be penetrated. Invisible to the eye of flesh, he sits in glory in the land of ever-

lasting bliss in company of the saints and sages of all ages and all lands. Finishing his life-work he has passed away into everlasting glory in the bosom of his loving Mother and we are left here to mourn his loss as best as we can, and like the poet Shelley I may write "Mourn, ye musical of mourners &c."

Though I do not see him, yet the past is a perennial source of bliss to me, a mine of unblemished joy and delight. Many a time and oft in the hush and stillness of night I seem to live in the past and become so much absorbed in thinking of my friend that I forget the present and seem to live many years back in the enjoyment of sweet companionship of our friends who are no more in this world. The familiar scenes of childhood bring back the memory, the familiar faces of men remind me of him. Like the song of cuckoo reminding the poet Wordsworth, in his advanced age, of golden vision of his childhood, every face of familiar men reminds me of him and of those happy and beautiful days of young age which have passed away like a charming soul-entrancing dream, never to come back again and gladden and cheer our hearts.

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## CHAPTER II.

### FAMILY HISTORY.

The family in which a child is born always throws a flood of light on its life and character. As there is a physical unity of type in every family so there are points of resemblance in the internal qualities, the inner characteristics. Some family bears a stamp of hereditary nobility.

Therefore when writing the biography of a man we must, first of all, try to give an account of his ancestors as far as possible.

The name of Benoy's grand-father was Ram Ratan Sen, an inhabitant of Tribeni—a place of pilgrimage to the Hindus, being the confluence of the three rivers Ganga, Jamuna and Saraswati. He belonged to the Physician's caste, though none in the family was known to be a practising physician. Ram Ratan worked as a clerk in the Bank of Bengal, now the Imperial Bank of India Ltd. Benoy's father Babu Madhu Soodan Sen was the only son of Ram Ratan. He prosecuted his studies in the Hare School, Calcutta, and was a class-fellow of the late Sir Gurudas Banerjee. Madhu Babu lost his mother when he was only 9 days old, and a wet nurse had to be engaged so that the infant thrived sucking the breast of a paid nurse. The infant grew up without mother's loving care, but grew to be a good and true man.

Madhu Babu passed the Entrance Examination of the Calcutta University from the Hare School and was reading in the Sibpur Engineering College when by an irony of fate his studies were cut short by the sudden death of his father who unfortunately could make no provision for his only son. He was, therefore, obliged to go into service, as the whole burden of the family—there being no other earning member—fell on his young shoulders. He, too, following the footsteps of his revered father, secured a job in the Bank of Bengal. Madhu Babu married early according to the custom then prevailing in the Hindu Society. He married a cousin sister of Brahmananda Keshub Chunder Sen, Mangala Devi, and by the sudden death of his father had to fight singlehanded the battle of life. By his marriage he was brought under the

influence of the Minister Keshub Chunder and was initiated as a Brahmo in the Adi Brahmo Samaj by the Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore. It will not be out of place here to record that he was a sincere believer in the creed of the Brahmo Samaj, a staunch follower of Keshub and stuck to him amidst all the changes and schisms in the church and never waivered in his faith. He felt deeply all his life the irreparable loss to the Church caused by the untimely death of its Leader.

His mighty faith in an allmerciful and over-ruling Providence ever upheld him to fight successfully against the trials and difficulties that beset us in every step of life. The simplicity of his life, the purity of his character and his trust in an all-wise and allmerciful Providence helped him to steer clear of all difficulties with his slender means and live a happy contented life. He always described himself before all in his prayers as কান্নাল গরীব. Seldom do we see a family so happy and contented where reigned peace and harmony and a moral atmosphere which helped the children to grow up in the path of virtue and rectitude.

Nor should we forget to give a short account here of the mother of Benoyendra, who followed the father through thick and thin rearing up the children with courage and faith in God, instilling in their minds the germs of those principles of morality and lofty thoughts which bore good fruits in future.

Benoyendra's mother, Mangala Devi, was the only daughter of Babu Saroda Prosad Roy of Kanchrapara, a prosperous village on the banks of the sacred river the Ganges, opposite to Tribeni who married the daughter of Babu Ramdhone Sen, the brother of the illustrious Dewan Babu Ramkamal Sen. His wife's brother Babu Madhab Chandra Sen was also the Dewan of the Bank of Bengal.



The late Professor Mohit Chandra Sen was a grandson of Babu Madhab Chandra Sen and hence Benoy was a near relation of Mohit Chandra. Babu Saroda Prosad Roy also worked in the Bank of Bengal. He had three sons: Dr. Tara Prosonno Roy Rai Bahadur, Chemical Examiner to the Government of Bengal, Shama Prosad Roy and Wooma Prosad Roy, both P. W. D. Accountants.

Mangala Devi was a lady of no common merit. Though born in an orthodox Hindu family, she followed her husband in all his religious and spiritual advancement and imbibed and grew in the spirit of the church to which her husband belonged. She was a true helpful loving companion of her husband, not only in managing and rearing up her children and in the management of all the domestic affairs but she helped and sympathised with him in his spiritual advancements. Hence, there ever reigned peace and harmony in the family and theirs was really a sweet ideal home in the true sense of the word. She passed her days happily with her husband surrounded by eleven children, six sons and five daughters. Madhu Babu died in the ripe old age of 69 in the year 1909 in the full odour of sanctity retaining to the last his full trust in God, never complaining but ever resigned to the will of God. Madhu Babu was a happy man. He died surrounded by children and grandchildren.

Mangala Devi bore her widowhood with a calm resignation, but a great sorrow was in store for her in the death of Benoyendra, but she bore her loss heroically with the calm resignation ever praying to God for her release and never losing her faith in God and hope of joining her husband and her first-born son in that happy realm above where there is no parting and no sorrow, but where reigns everlasting peace and blessedness. Happy are they indeed who have such faith and who can sav in all circumstances

“Lord, not mine but Thy will be done.” She was like dear mother to all of us and her memory will ever live fresh in our heart.

Benoyendra Nath was born in Calcutta on the 25th of September, 1868. He grew up being brought up by such virtuous parents and no wonder that he fully fulfilled the expectations of his parents being good, great and noble.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### EARLY LIFE AND EDUCATION.

My acquaintance with Benoy began as early as 1879, when I first took my admission in the 4th class, Albert School. Benoy was in the Sec. A. and I in the Sec. B, so I only knew him then as a fellow student. Our intimacy began from the 3rd class when there was but one section. He stood first in every annual examination and gave proof of his wonderful intelligence from his very infancy. I have heard that one day when reading in the 6th class there was no teacher present in the class and the boys were shouting and vociferating lustily, when Babu Hara Gopal Sarkar, a senior teacher of the school, came and asked the boys to write what they could about the Zoological Garden, simply to keep the boys engaged so that they might not disturb other classes. Benoy wrote in English and the teacher Babu Hara Gopal Sarkar looking at his paper went directly to the Rector Babu Krishna Behary Sen with it. He came back after a few minutes, asked Benoy if he had written it himself or copied from any book. Benoy never told a lie in his life and answered that it was his own composition. He would not believe it easily and asked him to write again while

he sat on the chair. Benoy, of course, wrote it out and to his surprise and wonder such composition in a foreign tongue for a boy of the 6th class really gave proof of exceptional intelligence and genius. From that time the Rector knew that Benoy was not a boy of ordinary merit.

One day when reading in the 3rd class, he took me to his home at Sankibhanga, a lane behind the Calcutta University building. There was no body in the house that day but his cousin whom we called Bhuto. Benoy was always very much fond of holding divine service with other friends, so he at once asked his cousin to begin the Service.

I then knew nothing of it though I attended the Brahmno Samaj on Sundays with Benoy. After the Service was over, his father came home from office and treated us all with sweets.

Thus from his early age he evinced his tendency for spiritual culture which grew with his years and deepened as years rolled by, till at last very little of flesh was left in him but a purely spiritual existence. Though of the earth yet long since self ebbed away and he lived and moved and had his being in God. When we read in the 3rd class, Benoy would call in the evening on 3 or 4 friends and then we would walk to Narkaldanga. He would first call Jogen, then my humble self, then Benoy Bhusan Bose (son of late Rev. Amrita Lal Bose from Mangalbari). Some other friends also occasionally joined us. There we would sit by the side of a lonely tank far away from the din, bustle and turmoil of the city. Sitting in such a lonely place with the infinite azure heaven overhead and hearing the rustling of the trees, our young hearts naturally turned to God. Benoy often conducted the Service, and some of us also offered individual prayers. Thus, nearly every day we

would pray together. What wholesome influence those daily prayers together had in forming our character, I cannot very well describe. We were a band of model young men formed by the care and love of one central figure and how often do I wish now that such bands would be formed by young men everywhere who are the future hopes of their country and thus may a great impetus be given for moral improvement which alone can make a country great. I have marked with great sorrow the degeneration of our youths. They are more or less godless and hence without character. What hope is there for a country whose youths are without any religion? We talk of political reformation and self-Government and of many things which seem to be quite out of place unless there be found solid, genuine God-fearing men. If we be good and deserving, I hope and trust that in the fulness of time all other things would be added unto us. We must always bear in mind "first deserve and then desire." This is indeed a digression, but I can't help making it remembering the present deplorable condition of the youths of my country. I am a veteran educationist and I have ever marked it with great concern.

Now to resume my subject. He taught me to pray, he taught me the seven attributes of God and every thing necessary to join in the Divine Service. Often we would sit on the grass in the College Square by the side of the tank and talk on various subjects. In his childhood he had an immense store of fun and merriment with flashes of innocent humour in him, but when talking of serious matters, he spoke often with feeling and earnestness. He could lead a conversation step by step and his ideas on any subject he would take were very clear and concise. I have come across very few men who had such clear

and concise ideas on a subject. He was master of the subject he would handle and we had engagements nearly the whole of a week in our school-days. One day we had debating society, one day club, one day prayer meeting and so on. In the 2nd class a Club was formed named the "The Friends' Athenæum" for intellectual culture, and for developing the power of speaking and writing, with Benoy as its Secretary. The meeting of the Club was held every Saturday after 2 p.m. in the premises of the Albert School by the kind permission of the then Rector Babu Krishna Behary Sen. A subject was chosen for discussion by every member in his turn. A member of the Club was chosen as the Chairman in every sitting of the Club and all the members were invited to throw light on the subject of the day. Benoy, as Secretary, would write the report of every meeting. One day a paper was read by the late Babu Satyendra Nath Sen, B.A., the Editor of the "Indian Mirror," on Raja Ram Mohan Roy. He was one of the best writers in our class and could write very decently for a student of the 2nd class. Benoy, in rising to remark on the subject, spoke very eloquently and feelingly and he concluded with these words "Can I keep quiet today, myself being a disciple of the New Dispensation." A fourth year student, whose name I do not like to mention here but who took a keen interest in all our proceedings, said, when going away, referring to the remarks made by Benoy, "it is needless to shine in borrowed feathers." He meant that Benoy got by heart the speech and simply vomited it out. At this the late Babu Satyendranath Sen, the lecturer of the day, said, "You are mistaken, Sir, the puny stripling will one day charm thousands of audience by his oration in the Town Hall in future." His words were "ওই ছেলে একদিন Town Hall ফাটাইবে" I do not know if the gentleman believed that

what Benoy spoke was his own and purely extempore. Benoy was the life and soul of the Club. From his childhood he could deliver extempore speeches eloquently and fluently. Though he had not the orator's voice, yet he had everything else necessary to be an orator. He could sometimes speak so fluently that it was difficult to follow him. Those who sat at his feet in the Presidency College will bear witness to it. Not only did he speak eloquently but what he spoke was full of deep thoughts and sentiments. Thus he developed his power of speaking. There was originality in what he said. His were no empty words of learned length and thundering sound, but he spoke wisdom. I will write more of this afterwards. The first anniversary of our Club was held in the Albert Hall. A gentleman from the Oxford Mission was the lecturer on the occasion and the late Rev. P. C. Mozoomdar presided. All these arrangements were made by Babu Nogendra Ch. Mitra of whom I will write at great length afterwards. Benoy wrote the annual report but unfortunately it was not printed for want of funds. It was a masterpiece and could never be expected from a boy of the 2nd class. I do not of course remember it but it began thus "Our Club is like a drop of water in the infinite ocean, like a grain of sand on the illimitable sea-shore, etc." Benoy at first wished to make the Rev. W. W. Hastie lecturer with Babu Keshub Chunder Sen as President, for he heard that Mr. Hastie had expressed a desire to deliver a lecture on "Thomas Carlyle." Babu Nogendra Ch. Mitra went to see Mr. Hastie but he said that the lecture on Carlyle had already been delivered by Mr. Mozoomdar and he had no leisure to speak on an anniversary meeting of a club of school boys.

I have already written that Benoy was never morose or grave like an owl. He had an infinite store of fun

and merriment and always took a keen interest in every kind of play or sport. He was fond of playing bat and ball when very young. Even when grown up he used to go to Narkaldanga and there played bat and ball. In this connection I shall mention another club of young men at Narkaldanga. The leaders of the club were Babu Sarat Ch. Chakravarti, now Swami Sarodananda of Ram Krishna Society and one Babu Satyendra Nath Ghosh. Benoy was a member of the club and attended its meetings once a week very regularly and Benoy used to tell me "long, learned papers were read out and often grave discussions took place but I sat mute most of this time." Here he played at bat and ball and some members of the club joined in it. Then he was very fond of playing cards. We often played cards and in later days when Mohit Chandra joined us we often played chess. Mohit was formerly the best chess-player among us, but in a few days Benoy could checkmate him. One day Benoy brought a 6d. edition of Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* and I wanted him to make a present of the book to me, to which he did not agree. But at last it was resolved that if I could decisively defeat him in chess he would give me the book. So we began to play and I had the good luck to beat him. I have still preserved the book as a sacred memento of my friend. All these show that he grew up naturally, he was not untimely rushed up. What with sport and play, what with fun and merriment, he grew up steadily and never in the midst of all these did he forget the great mission of his life; never did he miss the divine idea of the world and every man's destiny to be fulfilled in it. He was also fond of seeing circus. He went 3 or 4 times to see the Calcutta Exhibition of 1884. These were in him but all his serious thoughts like Goldsmith's clergyman rested in Heaven. Then he grew up like a high

mountain with the mists of the joys and sorrows of this world rolling round his breast, while the eternal sun-shine of God rested on his head.

I have already written that all his serious thoughts were centred in the culture and development of the spirit within. To this end he worked and lived. He valued highly the culture of the intellect, he was never indifferent to his health, but the most important and the all-absorbing thought that engrossed him was the spiritual culture and the formation of an ideal society of young men who would be able to carry on the work of the great minister Keshub Ch. Sen, who would be giant supporters of the cause of the Church of the New Dispensation. To this end he formed a Prayer Meeting which was regularly held on every Saturday. The members of the Prayer Meeting at first were Babus Suresh Ch. Dutt, Debendra N. Bose, Radhanath Sanyal, Jogendra Nath Laha, Beni Madhab Chaudhury Ashutosh Bannerjee, Akhoy Coomar Dutt, Rajani Kanta Ghose, Soshi Bhushan Mitra and my humble self and afterwards Mohit Ch. Sen. At first we had no fixed place for worship. It was held sometimes in the premises of the Albert College, sometimes in the house of Babu Akhoy Coomar Dutt. Benoy keenly felt the want of a fixed place. He often conducted the Service. His prayers were earnest, sincere and child-like. As a child asks his mother whatever he wants, so he prayed fervently to the Divine Mother for guidance, for strength to resist the temptations and to build up character. There was such a sweetness in his utterances that no one could go away without carrying a deep impression which lasted throughout the week. We all looked anxiously for Saturday to come, when these young souls sat under the footstool of God for prayer and adoration. All his



prayers in those days had one aim *i.e.*, strength to fight against temptations, to lead a pure life, and ever to remember God. The anniversaries of the Prayer Meeting were held with great earnestness and enthusiasm, and he tried to create a lasting impression on every member. He formed the programme in which there were English Service, Bengali lectures, and whole-day *Utsava* etc. just in imitation of the programme of the Church of the New Dispensation. I shall here describe one anniversary of the Prayer Meeting which I very distinctly remember. I had it written, but unfortunately, I have lost the paper. The place fixed for the anniversary was the Indian Mirror Office at College Square. For two days and nights we cleared the room of the accumulated dust of years, we swept the bugs away and made it in every way a fit place for worship, for Benoy had always an eye for cleanliness. He thoroughly realised that cleanliness is next to Godliness. He was always himself neatly and cleanly dressed. But unfortunately a day before the anniversary we were informed that the room could not be had. This was a severe blow to Benoy. Imagine his disappointment on hearing this, and he was at a loss to find out a suitable room for our purpose at the eleventh hour. His face became pale and the disappointment seemed to break down his spirit till at last he burst into tears. His tender heart could bear no more. He loved the Prayer Meeting more than his life. Fortunately for us all, a friend of ours living in Baniatola Lane fixed for us a room in Raja's Lane. It was a students' mess, but the members had all gone home during the vacation. Benoy's heart again leapt with joy and the anniversary was celebrated there with great joy and enthusiasm. The late Rev. Trailakya Nath Sanyal conducted the Divine Service in the

evening. At this time we became acquainted with Babu Nogendra Ch. Mitra. He was our elder in age and more advanced in spiritual life. Benoy honoured and respected him and he too loved Benoy sincerely seeing many excellent traits of his character which are very rarely seen in a young man of his age. He fixed a place for our Prayer Meeting in the house of the late Babu Kanai Lal Pyne. He often conducted the Services and we were all very greatly indebted to him for the various good services he rendered to us. I do not now exactly remember how long our Prayer Meeting was held at Babu Kanai Lal Pyne's house, but after leaving it the Prayer Meeting was held at Benoy's house at Kansaripara. There in that dingy small room we sat, there it was that he nourished his mighty heart like Carlyle at Craigenpattack.

Thus for years the Prayer Meeting was held at Kansaripara till he went away to Berhampore, as Head Master. He was the life and soul of the Prayer Meeting and when he went away we with all our efforts failed to continue it till at last it died a natural death.

It is not my purpose here to write a history of our Prayer Meeting, but I simply wish to point out to my readers Benoy's connection with it and how it helped him in his spiritual advancement. It is by prayer and prayer alone that he developed his soul. Prayer was the food of his soul, prayer to him was the very fountain of life which gave nourishment to his soul. Night and day his supplication rose to the Divine throne like a fountain for himself and for all his friends. Prayer to him was that attitude of the soul in which the God in man is one with man in God. It is humanity going up and Divinity coming down. Man asking, God giving. Call it prayer, or call it communion whatever you will. It is a blessed state which unites man with God. His prayers were never so

many words couched in a very decent and agreeable form, but it was intense and real bubbling out of the inmost depths of the soul and carrying along with it all who heard him in a tide of triumphant harmony heavenward. The world, its sorrows and joys, its manifold trials and sufferings were all forgotten and a blessed calm seemed to pervade all our being. From his very childhood he lost himself in his God and the prayer gave him strength ever to maintain his principles and walk in the path of rectitude and lead a holy and pure life inspite of the various temptations that abound in a city like Calcutta. He had the habit of daily prayer at a fixed hour from his very childhood. He insisted on all of us to form this habit. He used to say as we feel hungry at the appointed hour of our daily meals so also the spirit hankers after the Infinite when the time for daily prayer comes.

Had Keshub Chunder Sen lived a few years more, I think Benoyendra's life would have flowed in another channel. He would have been a solid worker in the field of religion instead of being a silent philosopher. There were unmistakable signs in him of taking the mission work in his early life, yet why he took to secular work is indeed a mystery. I myself thought that he took to teaching only temporarily and the time would come soon when he would devote his time and energy to mission work. But though he took secular work, yet in spirit he was a true missionary and had done solid work in the field of preaching by lectures, sermons and other writings, and various active works of philanthropy and benevolence.

In school days Benoyendra did not care much for reading or scholarship, but his natural intelligence helped him to master his lessons within a very short period of time. He stood first in his class in every examination.

From his school days he was more fond of reading out-books than the prescribed books of the class. Thus he was far advanced of his class in every subject, especially in English literature. He read two or three hours a day his school books at the utmost. He would remain out in the evening till 9 p.m. so he had little time to read at night and in the morning also he did not read much. Thus when he was promoted to the Entrance Class no body thought that he would stand so high in competition. We all thought that he would only come out in the First Division. On the eve of the Entrance Examination he read the whole English course, a Book of Golden Deeds, at night, sitting up till 2 a.m. in the morning. He finished the whole book in one day. Thus we were all surprised when we heard that he had stood 4th in the order of merit of the Calcutta University with a scholarship of Rs. 20/- a month, in the Entrance Examination in 1884. His success in the University examination gave proof of his wonderful intelligence and talent, and our Rector Babu Krishna Behary Sen was highly pleased with his success and called him one day and asked him what sort of arrangement he would like to be made in the College Department of the Albert College. This was, of course, a great honour to the young successful candidate. He read in the Albert College and passed the F.A. Examination in the First Division without securing any scholarship and read for the B.A. in the General Assembly's Institution. In B.A. Examination he took Honours in English and Philosophy. Mr. Smith, the then Principal of the College, appreciated the genius of his pupil by seeing his aptitude to enter into discussions on Philosophy. Here he got a medal writing an essay on some theological subject. It was a masterpiece and surprised

the professors by the depth of knowledge and power of originality of the young pupil. He got the First Class Honours both in English and Philosophy. After passing B.A. he taught for some months in the Normal Girls School. He was recommended for this post by the Principal Rev. W. Smith. At first he took Philosophy as his subject for M.A. as may be naturally expected. But 4 or 5 months before the examination he one day came to me and said, "Please procure for me as many books of History as you can for the M.A. examination. I have given up Philosophy and want to go in for History."

I was surprised and told him that how he would be able to go through all the books of History in so short a time. But he smiled a little and said "I will try, let me see what I can do." We were all astonished to see when the result was out that he was alone in the First Class with no body in the Second Class and one or two only in the 3rd Class. This shows what intelligence he had. He was never very studious in his habits and it is no small proof of his talents that he could master all the books of History in so short a time and pass so creditably. Next year he again appeared in Philosophy and passed successfully. His answer papers in Philosophy were marked as wonderful specimens of philosophic insight and originality. Here of course ended his University career at once brilliant and successful though he never gave any importance to University distinction. He was simply indifferent to it. What he wanted is real culture and he cultivated his intellect simply as a means to an end and to strengthen his faith and put it on a firm basis. All his studies were therefore as help to spiritual culture. When Benoy was in the 1st year class, Mohit Chunder joined us, and here I must pay my tribute of respect to the sacred memory of my dear friend, who was as dear to me

as Benoy himself. He burst upon us like a brilliant restless light to our wonder and admiration. He was verily a Platonic idea as Dr. Seal called him. Fresh from nature, an artless, innocent soul unused to the ways of the world he came in our midst a towering personality with divine light burning fiercely in him. He was by relation Benoy's cousin, and son of Babu Joy Kissen Sen, M.A., at whose feet we sat for many years in the Albert College and grandson of Babu Madhab Chandra Sen, Dewan of the Bank of Bengal. Both were filled with a sense of Divine mission, a glow with heavenly energy constantly burning in them and driving them ever onward and heavenward. Benoy was ever steady and firm but Mohit was sentimental and emotional. He joined heart and soul in all our movements and soon became a central figure. He was very simple in his dress and food, though he could eat much. Long discussions took place between Benoy and Mohit when they first began to read Philosophy. 'There seemed no end to their discussions and Mohit's voice could be heard from a great distance. Rev. Bhai Promotho Lall Sen (Naloo) also began to mix with Benoy at this time of his life, though he did not join in any of our movements. He would come to Benoy nearly every evening and sit for hours and hours together in the dark dingy room of Kansaripara without speaking a single word. This was indeed communion of two noble souls, a feast of spirits. Benoy sometimes told me that he felt awkward at the profound silence of Naloo. He appreciated the worth of Benoy and would therefore come to him to indulge in the luxury of companionship of such a great mind.

From a very early age he could know, though he was modest, that he had a mission in life, that he must prepare himself for his mission for which his Maker had

sent him to this world. So he began his life with the true spirit of a missionary. He began his life in simple, artless and sincere prayer. He prayed even when a mere boy, fervently, earnestly and sincerely, revealing his whole heart to his Maker in asking for His blessings and strength to steer clear of all vices and temptations and snares that abound in this world. Thus in early life by prayer and self-control he formed his character. He struggled hard to lead a pure and unblemished life and he was fully successful in doing so. Never was there a single instance in which he deviated from the path of virtue and truth. I have seldom seen such a youth of unblemished purity of character and strict moral principles and severely just. He prayed, he thought, he took vows, left animal food so that he might form his character on strict moral principles. A pure character he coveted and aspired after and he got it to such a degree that all might follow in his footsteps. As he practised all these himself, he advised all his friends to do the same. He was pained if he saw any one of his friends going astray. He would rebuke mildly and sometimes he would burst into tears—tears such as angels weep. With an amplitude of mind to greatest deeds, he began his career. An intense vitality, a tremendous earnestness and an exuberance of love and tenderness helped him to grow up, and, ever amid the vices and iniquities of the world, came voices from a far off region, came unseen dawning splendour of heaven which presented the universe to him as a temple of immensity where as man he had been sent by the Almighty Father to minister unto others. The message of every hero-soul in this world is to penetrate into the bottom of every appearance and proclaim to men the Divine idea of the world. From the starry heavens above

to every particle of atom in the world, all proclaim the glory of the All-pervading Spirit and man's mission in this world. There is a purpose and design in creation and he who runs may read. There is nothing useless or superfluous in this world, all are in their proper places to serve a purpose, though we, in our blindness and ignorance, see it not. This vast illimitable universe with its teeming millions of men and animals, plants and trees, minerals and vegetables, of tiny particles of atoms and huge granite rocks, its rivers and oceans and lakes, all give proof of a design, and, of the Almighty hand that guides them. My friend penetrated this Divine mystery of creation and saw the finger of an overruling Providence in every event of history and in individual life and believed in the ever-progressive design of a Master, the First Cause, from Whom emanates this entire wonderful, beautiful, sublime creation. Science unfolds his purposes, metaphysics penetrates the veil that's shut from our eyes the Divine All-Powerful intelligence, poetry sings in celestial strain the song of the beauty of creation. He fully believed that one purpose runs through the whole creation and the minds of men are enlightened and enlarged by the process of suns. Orbs on orbs, worlds on worlds, in endless succession roll, gyrate and advance towards the fulfilment of the mighty design in creation. To my friend the beautiful and sublime creation was no fortuitous concourse of atoms, no baseless fabric of a vision, no mere sensation of the idealist but a solid reality, a tremendous frame-work of an All-wise Providence, a stupendous movement of the Arch Artist God Himself, Whose grandeur and power and love are reflected, as in a glass, in every object of creation.



*A few of his letters, written in early life may be cited  
here by way of illustration.*

LETTERS OF PROF. BENOYENDRA NATH SEN  
TO A FRIEND.

I.

Calcutta, 5 Krishna Das Pal's Lane,  
July 15, 1884.

I do not know how to address you. Pardon my embarrassment. Why do you love me? Believe me, I am not worthy of your touch, your kindness overpowers me. May God make me worthy of it.

You wish to stand with me 'on a higher platform'. Brother! have you had to shed a tear of repentance? If you ever have, recollect that moment. For it is in that, that you can see me and be united to me!

There was an angel in this world whom even my stubborn heart loved and revered. God alone knows how dear was he to me, how fondly did I cling to him! Where has that angel fled? My life seeks to find him out. He is the object of my study, his ideal is my ideal, to follow him and serve him is my aspiration.

Do you wish to hear how far have I approached my ideal? A vast bright Infinity of the love and devotion, purity and peace stretched far and wide before me, and I—oh! what am I? A rebuking conscience replies "even night in the zenith of her dark domain is sunshine to the colour of thy soul!"

Will you open your heart and pour into mine your thoughts and sentiments?

How far have you recovered your health? That in you Grace and Peace may be ever multiplied is the humble prayer of

Sincerely yours,  
Benoyendra Nath Sen.

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## II.

Calcutta,  
The 18th February, 1885.

Dear Brother,

What a happy state is that of the child! Yet what is the secret of its blessedness? Is it not simplicity of Faith? I philosophise, I speculate, I labour,—and my reward is wretchedness! Life is to me a mystery—a burden! But in utter helplessness and absolute submission I resign myself to the care of my God,—and oh! what a change! The Evil itself loses its position, and my path becomes bright and smooth and delightful. The little brook flows on wherever the Power above leads it—has it ever failed to reach the ocean? If man be the master of his own life—he is a usurper—a thief! My whence and my whither I care not to solve. Enough that I find Him<sup>\*\*\*</sup> out Who is the Whence of all whences, and the Whither of all whithers. He that guides the helpless brook to the sea and not to the desert, will He lead His frail child to destruction? Faith, Brother, faith is the thing. Try to grasp Infinity, and what but disappointment and despair can you expect? Think not for the morrow, and whole Eternity is within the clutches of your hand! How simple and sweet is our relation to God! The Infinite is Father, the Eternal our Friend? What a boon is Grace! The Divinity that is hidden in mystery I have not learnt.

to explore. My God has ever been the Friend of the poor, the Father of the thoughtless, the Redeemer of sinners. Know you Him not? He can satisfy all your doubts, answer all your perplexities,—give you Peace. What other spirituality is than to live in Him as His child? Is spirituality anything extraordinary, anything supernatural? My spirituality is my God-given Nature—and my greatest happiness, the perfection thereof. What though I am a wretched sinner? Can I be my own saviour? Faith is my life. Realize only one thing,—a near and dear God, ever ready to help you,—and the brightness and joy of the Daylight will dawn upon you,—the Fountain of Love will bathe you in the waters of Peace; Heaven will be a reality of the Present;—Life will be Eternity begun! So God's blessing on you!

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### III.

5, Krishnadas Pal's Lane,  
8 February, 1886.

Dear Brother,

My dogged silence cannot but have struck you.. Not that silence was the thing of my choice—that would be a lie—but in simple truth, I had scarcely any choice at all in the matter. The mysterious explanation I have always trusted to your forbearing love to make out.

Now that I have ventured to take up my pen, what uppermost thought of my heart shall I communicate to you? Brotherhood always calls up to my mind the idea of a kingdom—the kingdom, which, first promised to the world from the wilderness of Judea, has once more in our days been held up to the expectation of the present generation. For that kingdom my heart pants, my soul prays,

my life waits in anxious suspense. Oh, how I wish to be included in that holy brotherhood, to be one of that happy band—a band of sinners—saved by the sweet, free grace, of the merciful Father! Where is that long, long promised kingdom? Where is the rushing flow of repentance that is to precede its advent? When is it to come? Dear Brother, is your heart cheered by any prognostications of that happy day?

Is our Father in heaven a deceiver? Is His promise ever left unredeemed, our trust in Him ever betrayed? If there is any truth in Heaven, the declaration shall be written out, even with the blood of my heart.

The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand! Amidst the darkness that surrounds me I behold there burns in heavenly characters the thrilling warning—Prepare! Vain man doubts and disbelieves and revels away the whole night, till when the morning breaks, lo! he is fast asleep or otherwise utterly unfit to enjoy the Bridegroom's feast! How calm, how smooth, how seemingly insignificant is this night—this awful time for preparation! From the awful depths of such darkness, let me cry out—Behold! the Land of Light is drawing nigh! Brother, the days of light-hearted apathy and childish recklessness are gone! In right earnest I say this life would be as worse than nothing if the above be not faithfully borne out. And if the promised kingdom really comes amongst us, and if poor Benoy be privileged to have an humble place in it, can I doubt but—will have been already there?

Yours affectionately,  
B. N. SEN.

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## IV.

5, Krishna Das Pal's Lane,  
July 5th, 1887.

Dear brother,

So you are come back (if your last letter prophesies true). I am sorry the "long letter" intended for me was not finished. I always read your letters with eagerness and delight. And even when their meaning is not everywhere clear and distinct to me, as I confess is sometimes the case, still what is a puzzle to the head often serves as a source of great edification, I might almost say inspiration to the heart.

It has been promised to those that seek that they shall find. But how long does it take a man in seeking? Is it meant one can seek and find at once and once for all and then be at rest? The weak heart cries aloud for the Lord and longs to have Him secure within an iron chest, that it might then go to sleep and use Him at pleasure! Oh! vain delusion to represent heaven as a place of rest and security! Ours is rather a hard lot—a life of unceasing struggle—no rest after a final triumph but either victory or death at each moment. Surely he finds who seeks; but then if his vision does not brighten the next moment and still more in the next and so on, the inexorable curtain falls between, and he loses what he has found before!

And then—then the gloom of night again—the blindness, the wretchedness, the lifelessness of doubt and hesitation and loss of faith! Oh for a life that walks from light to light, and never a shade of gloom between! But alas, as it is, between the lofty peaks of pleasant sunshine there is a dark vale of tears. Since I must visit that place, let me be there alone. My smiles I will invite

the world to share with me; but my struggles and defeats, my agonies and despairs, and I have them in abundance, Heaven forbid that I should inflict these upon the cheerful souls around. My tears I will pour into the bosom of Eternal Love alone, and if any body should ever behold them, it must be when they come out again in springs of joy. Is it strange then that to so many questions asked by my friends, and you amongst them, silence is often my only answer.

Yours affectionately,  
BENOV.

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# PROF. BENOYENDRA NATH SEN'S LETTERS TO SRIJUT SURENDRA NATH DUTT.

## V.

[This letter is written on Benoyendra Nath's own birthday, on "*A Birthday Greeting*" ornamental card containing a pretty picture of a twig of *Blue Bells* placed between two *Mushrooms*, with the following words printed underneath:—

"Unto you be given, I pray,  
Heaven's best blessings this glad day."]

TO SURENDRA NATH DUTT.

Dear Brother,

We forget God, and then fear that He has forgotten us; we shut our eyes and then imagine that all the world is dark. When there is dryness in our hearts there are showers above; when there are tears in our eyes, there is joy in Heaven. How wide is the separation between the

two? They are extremes—but do not opposing extremes often ultimately meet?

Yours affectionately,  
BENOY.

25th Sept. 1887.

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## VI.

5, Krishnadas Pal's Lane,  
23 February, 1888.

Dear Brother,

At a moment when I most needed it, your letter came to me as a Heaven-sent warning. And as my heart recognised in it the gentle, loving, sweet reproof of the Father, it could not help blessing the brother through whom it was breathed.

Glorious indeed is the picture you have drawn of your Benoy. If it is meant to be a rebuke, I confess I do not deserve a milder one. But if it has any other meaning, which my heart trembles even to imagine, then Brother, curse the necessity which forces me to ask it, and begin to hate him whom you have so long loved under that name.

And yet don't think I am writing this through despondency. It were better that my hand were paralysed. You know full well the list of the blessed as published to the world two thousand years ago. Oh let me plead the overflowing of my heart, if I am under need of being pardoned, if I venture to add one more to the list—

*Blessed are the sinners for they shall be saved!*

Let me confess it to my shame that this heart is as Hell itself. But woe to these ungrateful lips if they

suppress the other side of the truth! What so blessed as this heart? A single step!—a moment!—and Oh, hallowed be His name, all this gloom and wretchedness is gone and His kingdom is come!

Yours affectionately,  
BENOY.

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## VII.

Samastipur,  
March 11, 1890.

My dear Suren,

I have so few things to write about that it would be best for me to be altogether silent, but that I feel it to be my duty to keep up some communication with my friends in Calcutta. I do not much like my present situation. The days here are not unpleasant, this being probably the best part of the spring. I take a walk both morning and evening, and the wide, lonely cornfields present a very agreeable contrast to the crowded dusty streets of Calcutta. But it is too true that nothing from the outside can ever fill up the blank that lies deep-seated in the mind, and I need hardly tell you that my soul is hungering and thirsting for something which I have as yet sought in vain in the charms of external Nature.

In every human life probably there is a period when Nature delights to mock the soul with hopes and expectations which she takes special care to disappoint. We are all born idolators. From our birth upwards our hopes have some visible and tangible centre. Then comes a time when we are rudely flung away from the support to which we had hitherto fondly clung and we find ourselves



all alone and helpless to struggle through our misty way as best we can. The first tendency of the mind if it be not completely broken down under such circumstances is a proud assertion of self taking shelter from the cruel blows of the world in a spirit of defiant independence. What, however, is this self which we want to make our refuge but the darkness of death? We had made idols for ourselves in the world—they are broken, we now make an idol of our own will, but behold it is the Devil! Scared away from these two quarters, will it still be long before the soul finds out where at last it is to be blest with eternal rest and peace? My space is done up. So here let me cut short my sermon.

Yours sincerely,  
BENOV.

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## VIII.

Gorabazar,  
July 6, 1890.

My dear Suren,

The place where I now am is very different from the one whence I wrote you last. I wish I had all my friends with me here in this small verandah where I am now sitting; the mid-day sun hidden behind clouds white and dark with spots at intervals of the deepest blue; a crowd of white herons and other sorts of birds clamouring on the large trees just in front of me, a large green field spread at a distance of only a few feet and, above all, the dark waters of the Ganges flowing on ever in the same direction almost directly under my eyes. If what external nature alone can give could satisfy the cravings of the

heart, certainly it would not be so much a hardship for one to have to pass his days at Berhampore.

You cannot imagine how dull I am. But I hope you will excuse my cutting short my letter at this place.

Yours fraternally,

BENOY.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### WORKS AND ACTIVITIES.

Passing the B.A. examination, in 1888, Benoy was appointed to teach in the Normal Girls' School, Calcutta, for some months, through the recommendation of the then Principal of the General Assembly's Institution. Then after passing the M.A. examination in History, he thought seriously of some job, for he could not rest quiet in view of the growing old age of his father. He applied for the post of Head Master at Berhampur and at that time he thus wrote to Khetra Babu, Translator, Berhampur Court and son-in-law of Benoy's *Baramama*—the late Rai Bahadur Tara Prasanna Roy, Chemical Examiner to the Government of Bengal.

His applications are appended too.

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5, Kristodas Pal's Lane,  
February 19, 1890.

My dear Khetra Babu,

This day I send in my application according to your direction. I have been compelled to make this delay of two or three days because, for various reasons my mind was in a state of agitation. I hope this will not produce any harm.

I have stated in the application everything that you wanted me to state. But I have ventured to violate your directions in one point—I have not procured a letter of

recommendation from Lall Madhab Babu (Dr. Lalmadhab Mukerjee Rai Bahadur) or from any other person. I fail to see what useful purpose such a letter would serve. I can not wish that in an appointment of this kind, the matter should be decided upon any other issue than that of qualification alone, and it would hardly be right for me to try to secure through personal influence any advantage over another applicant whose claims may really be stronger than my own, but who happens to labour under the accidental disadvantage of not being known to any person having influence with the Principal.

You want me to give some assurance with respect to my sticking to the post. You are already aware, in some measure, of my inclination or rather determination on this point. You remember how strongly I set my face against your proposal about the Sub-Executive Service examination, and that is the only thing I could possibly think of, if ever I were to turn away from the educational line. I can hardly express how the happiness of my whole life and, what will probably appear very strange to you, even the stability of my moral constitution are mixed up with this chance of my getting a suitable employment in the field of education. I have sometimes thought of the possibility of my failing in this,—and it is only when I am confronted by the dreary prospect of my having to go abegging to this man and to that man in order to be raised to the dignity of a schoolmaster in an out of the way village, where I shall have to lull asleep or bury underground my dear, long-cherished ideas and impulses as best may, and at the same time I find my circumstances goading me on even to such a den of obscurity—it is only during such a mood of despair that I have a faint idea of my being at last compelled to seek refuge in the Deputy Magistrate's Court :—but then in such moments I feel as if my whole moral

and social being were giving way under me and I were falling into an abyss where the once tender and overflowing heart hardened into an obstinate cynic would diabolically set at defiance all claims of time and eternity upon it. You will pardon this effusion on my part, but it came very naturally. You see from this that I have not at all changed my mind since I talked with you last, and you can confidently tell Hemendra Babu or any other person, if necessary, that I will never think of abandoning this post unless, of course, I get a more preferable one in the same line, or indeed I make up my mind to become a regular missionary! (the last between ourselves). I have said something about this in my application also.

I had at first a mind to keep this whole thing a secret from my parents that I might spare them a disappointment or give them a surprise in case my suit should be successful. But your postcard fell into the hands of Satya and has let the entire cat out of the bag. This day I have unburdened my mind to you in a way I seldom do to any body, and let me entreat you you will not please reveal everything to people here in Calcutta.

I don't know how to be sufficiently thankful that I have got a friend like yourself in this emergency, and one of the considerations, not the least, that endear to me the prospect of my getting this appointment in Berhampore is that, should I succeed, I should have a neighbour like you in a place where I should be a perfect stranger—not a very slight consideration probably for a man who has never in his life travelled beyond thirty miles off Calcutta or kept away from home for more than a month at the utmost.

Yours affectionately,  
BENOY.

5, Kristodas Pal's Lane,  
Calcutta, Feb. 19, 1890.

To

The Secretary to the Board of Trustees,  
Berhampore College.

Sir,

Having made up my mind to devote my life to the educational service, I have been for some time past on the look-out for a suitable employment in that line. Now, happening to learn that the post of Head Master in the Berhampore College has fallen vacant and a new appointment will be shortly made, I venture to send in this application though, as far as I am aware, the vacancy has not been publicly advertised.

No one can be more fully conscious than myself that a brilliant University career simply is far from constituting a sufficient qualification for a post of this nature, and in my case even this qualification is not present in a degree that I could be justified in making much of. In the Entrance examination I was placed Fourth in order of merit ; I passed the F.A. in the First Division and the B.A. with First Class Honours in English and Philosophy, and in the M.A. examination of last year I went in for History and the result shows my name in the First Division at the top of the list of successful candidates in that subject.

Besides this, I have had some small experience in teaching—I have for nearly two years (two complete sessions) been employed in teaching English and History to an Entrance Class consisting of European and Eurasian girls.

But these qualifications are not what I would attach much importance to, if they were not accompanied by

something else which I think deserves far greater consideration, I mean the applicant's interest in the work he is offering to undertake. The task of educating the young requires a degree of patience, forbearance and loving care which a perfect sympathy with the work alone can give; and specially at the present time when we are awaking to a consciousness of the growing moral wants of Indian youths, any one that ventures to take the work of education in hand should feel it to be a sort of mission work scarcely less sacred than that of the preacher himself. If this consideration has any weight with the Board with whom, I am told, the decision in the matter of this appointment rests, it will not be out of place in this application to state that it comes from one who has chosen his profession not at hap hazard but upon deliberate choice and who, as the result of that choice and with a full consciousness of his responsibility, looks upon education as the special field of work to which, for good or for evil, he is called upon to devote the best energies of his life. I am not, of course, so unreasonable as to claim that because I have this consciousness I ought to be regarded as fully fitted for the work. Nothing can be truer than this that a teacher, throughout his life long labours, has every day to learn far more than he can possibly teach his pupils. But I have a firm faith that I possess in some degree that earnestness and enthusiasm for the cause which will enable me to rectify my intellectual and moral deficiencies as I go on, so as always to bring myself up to the requirements of my office.

I have nothing further to add. I should be the last person to expect that the appointment should be given me if there are others better qualified than myself, willing to accept the post. I have tried to state briefly what can be expected from me, and I will end by simply re-

peating the assurance that I would spare no pains, or rather it would be the highest pleasure of my life to make my services acceptable to God and man, if in the matter of this appointment the choice should happen to fall upon me.

I have, etc., etc.  
BENOYENDRA NATH SEN.

\* \* \* \* \*

To

The Director of Public Instruction,  
Bengal.

Sir,

I beg most respectfully to bring to your notice that having completed my course of study under the University, I am very desirous of getting some educational employment which I have fixed upon as the line in life best suited to me. It will not, I believe, be out of place here to state that I have not attended any Law lectures and do not mean to do so in future.

I passed the B.A. Examination in 1888 with First Class Honors in English and Philosophy, and last year I went in for M.A. in History and succeeded in passing that Examination standing First in the First Division. For further information respecting me I beg to subjoin a true copy of a certificate from the Principal of the College in which I studied.

Under these circumstances, I should be very thankful if you would be kind enough to take my case into consideration on the occurrence of any vacancy at your disposal, which you think a person with my qualifications could suitably fill, and I venture to give the assurance



that should you give me an appointment I would spare no pains to prove myself worthy of the favour.

I have the honor to remain,  
Sir,  
Your most obedient servant,  
BENOYENDRA NATH SEN.

5, Kristo Das Pal's Lane,  
Calcutta.  
The 19th February, 1890.

\* \* \* \* \*

Kristodas Pal's Lane,  
Friday night,  
June 20, 1890.

My dear Khetra Babu,

I had almost given up the thought of Berhampore, and what with gathering mists around, together with sympathetic humours from within, my vision was becoming a little hazy, when like a clear ray of light through the parted clouds, comes your sweet evening message. Yet not altogether sweet, for I had exchanged thoughts with Mohit on the near prospect in which we both heartily rejoiced, so that it is not without a secret pang as of separation before union that I can think of the latter part of your communication. I can only hope that this disappointment will not be so painful to him as I fear it may be.

Neither am I so light and free in other respects as this news might be expected to make me. I am rather in a somewhat perplexing dilemma. This very day, before

receiving your letter, I had a call from Mr. Morrison, now the Principal of the G. A. Institution, who showed me a circular letter from the Registrar which stated that the Board of Examiners had recommended one Binoyendra Nath Sen, M.A. for the State Scholarship tenable in England and wanted to know if the said Benoyendra Sen was willing to avail himself of the said scholarship. The temptation was too much for me, and I myself was the bearer of a letter from the Principal to the Registrar giving all the necessary information. I am not sure if you know that I had applied for the State Scholarship in 1888, but then the preference was given to another. And now again, when I had almost forgotten that such a scholarship existed and was beating up all my philosophy to make out what could be made of this fertile soil at home, here is this Tantalus' Cup very close up to my lips, and fool that I am I cannot help looking wistfully at this glistening liquid not a drop of which probably is to come into contact with my throat. The University Board, like the Berhampore one, must be fishing with many hooks though they want but a single fish, and all that I know for certain of the matter is that it must be decided in a week at the utmost. If fortune really smiles upon me, as Mr. Morrison observed in the morning, I shall have to bid adieu to Berhampore: till that happens, I am thine and no other's. O! Beautiful City, of which, like "Yarrow unvisited," I have dreamt these two or three years past. Pray God that the truth be fairer than the dream, and the charms be greater of "Yarrow Visited" than of that when not seen!

Since this thing about England is still in the region where chaos is and where light is not, were it not better that I asked you to be silent till it take some shape and afford occasion for a moment's laughter,—or tears—or both,—or I know not what?

So much of nonsense. All the letters I write to you are filled with so much about myself alone, but the spirit has not bulk and can be put, as much of it in a single line as in whole pages or volumes; so believe me, I have not written the above with half so much heartiness as that with which I wish and hope that you and yours may be happy for ever and ever!

Yours affectionately,  
BENOV.

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From the letter quoted above it may be understood that he had an offer of the State Scholarship, but he did not get it. Mohit Chunder also wrote a letter to Berhampur for an appointment, as he wished very much to be near Benoy, which shows what a deep friendship and love existed between them. The true biography of every man, as says the professor himself, is not what he writes on parchment or even on rocks and pillars but on the souls of his friends. If the biography of a hero soul stands recorded in the lives of millions of men then none can deny the authenticity of the biography though there be no written records of the same. Take for instance the life of Shakespeare. There is no authentic written record of Shakespeare but his life is recorded, generation after generation, in millions of souls. Such is also the case with my friend. There may not be many records of his services to the cause of humanity but his career as an educationist and as a religious preacher is recorded in letters of gold on innumerable men who have been benefited by his teachings and who have come under his great moral influence. As Jesus lives in the charities,

worships and various philanthropical activities of Christendom, as Buddha lives in the saintly lives of various Buddhist monks and preachers, so Benoyendra lives in the reformed lives of many students of this country and in the regenerated lives of his many friends and relations. Benoy did enter the educational line in the true spirit of a missionary. Here in the field of education can one show more of his activity as a religious preacher than in any other sphere of life. A religious preacher may visit town after town, country after country, man even goes out to another continent to propagate his views and make converts. But a teacher forms the future lives of his country, moulds the characters of those who are the future hopes of the world, sows seeds of morality and spiritual truths in the fertile young souls which will germinate into large trees in future, and will give shelter and food to many a weary pilgrim in the dreary waste of this world. Noble is the vocation of a teacher and what untold benefit will not the country enjoy which can boast of many such professors as my friend. But alas, there are few in the line, who can reach his standard. His career as an educationist was a complete success, for few indeed in the line could gain such universal popularity, few could reign supreme master in the hearts of youths, few could instil in the hearts of his pupils such strict principles of morality, of brotherliness, and love like him. His career as an educationist began first at Berhampur. Passing the M.A. examination in History, as I have already written, he was appointed Head Master in the Berhampur Collegiate School and passed the M.A. examination in Philosophy whilst acting as such. There was a galaxy of the elites of the Calcutta University in the staff with the renowned Dr. Brojendranath Seal as the Principal. I may

mention here some of the eminent professors there, such as Babus Janakinath Bhattacharjee and Sashi Bhusan Dutt. Shortly after his appointment, Mohit Chandra was also appointed a professor there and then the two friends were again united after a separation of a few months. I was at the time invited by Benoy to go to Berhampur and live with them. I and Mohit Chandra went there together and Benoy had a house ready to receive us. But everything for our comforts was managed by Khetra Babu. By his care we were very comfortably installed at Berhampur and then after a few days another friend of ours, Babu Jogendranath Laha, joined us. Here as a Head Master, he was very popular and Dr. Seal and all other professors very soon appreciated his merit and his intellectual attainments. They soon found out that he was made of solid stuff, was a great man in every sense of the word, pure and simple as a child, yet conscious of the responsibility of his work, high-minded and generous, but not yielding an inch in his principles, and with no mean order of intellectual culture. His moral greatness, his spiritual insight and his earnestness to rise higher and higher in the scale of spiritual perfection made him honoured, respected and loved by all with whom he came in contact. Again he organised a regular Prayer Meeting there. He was always very lavish in his praise of Dr. Seal, and extolled him to the seventh heaven for his erudition which is high as heaven and deep as ocean. In 1891, Benoyendra was appointed a Professor in the Tej Narayan Jubibe College at Bhagalpur—a post more agreeable to him than that of a Head Master of a School. And when he went to Bhagalpur, Dr. Seal remarked, “We regretted not so much the loss of any one of our staff as we did of Professor Sen.” I paid him a visit to Bhagalpur also, and here also he was univer-

sally popular. He liked more to be a Professor than to be a Head Master. A letter to Khetra Babu written from Bhagalpur runs thus:—

Bhagalpore,  
September 5, 1891.

My dear Khetra Babu,

I hope the clouds and vapours have left your eyes by this time, and in the bright, noonday light when the peon hands over this letter into your hands you will have no difficulty in going through its ill-arranged, ill-penned lines. I don't know how, but the idea had grown in my mind that to the people of Berhampore, to my colleagues and pupils, I was but as a shadow that glided across their field of vision at fitful moments, and that was never likely to be missed if it passed away to the antipodes or even into the region of ghosts from whence it came. With you I felt it was otherwise. And though when I watched the simple-hearted boys of my class running after the steamer that long distance and straining their eyes after it till it finally disappeared, and again at Khagra I met a number of other boys who had waited since day-dawn at the Steamer Ghat simply to have a parting look at me, I could not but feel that unknown to me, a human tie had silently bound me to Berhampore, yet I felt and still feel that that tie centred principally in him but for whom I might have never seen Berhampore, and who will most feel deserted now that I am away. As for Mohit, it is certain that his connection with Berhampore can not be long, but to you who seem to have struck your roots deep down in that rank soil, I can simply say—when did you ever come across a man that was not selfish? Besides have I not relieved you of a burden by coming away? and as for meeting,

what is there to hinder you from coming to Bhagalpore when you get a holiday?

I am as yet alone. Only some member of the college staff comes in now and then to have a chat, and Baladev Babu came two evenings to have a talk on various matters. As yet I have had only a view from a distance while walking in the fields, of what they here know as the Brahmo-para, but at the rate I am going on, my acquaintance with that neighbourhood must be slow. My pupils are a curious set of creatures which I should like to exhibit before those professors of the B. College who make so many complaints about their boys. They are perfectly quiet and docile, and in the 4th year class it is quite a sight to see what a nod of assent they give to every word I say, but when you chance to go out of your way to ask a question, their faces put on all appearances as blank as the summer-sky. It is with these people that I have to work regularly for four hours every day; and the chances are many that the four may become five or even six, as some have already expressed a desire to honour me with visits at home. But here you have not got the damp as at Berhampore, nor the dullness and drowsiness that are exhaled by the atmosphere of that place, and with the filtered water you get you have a sense of cleanliness in the bath and in the condition of your clothes which is very much refreshing. My house has spacious compounds on all sides which keep off the dust and noise of the street to a considerable distance, and opportunity serving, I hope to get good exercise with the hatchet and the hoe. The thought that I can call these things mine own and that in this backward district if too fond an eagerness leads me to labour more than I deserve, there will be no one at the

back to cry—Mudder, stop,—makes me really very, very happy. Wishing a tenfold such happiness to you and yours,

Yours affectionately,  
BENOY.

\* \* \* \* \*

The following notes written, whilst at Bhagalpur, may be interesting reading as expressing the thoughts which were working in his mind at the time.

“And may Yarrow visited have a thousandfold greater charms than Yarrow not seen, so that this weary soul of mine may find therein an abode of lasting rest!” So I wrote to K—when the prospect of my getting the appointment at Berhampore had assumed the shape of definite certainty. Now that I have parted from the place, I think and hope for ever, shall I sit down and say like a cynic,—surely, it is better far for us to be dreaming than to be awake?

Sweet was the moment when under the midday sun I first caught a distant glimpse from the bosom of the river of that beautiful, Church-like building on that beautiful strand: Familiarity could never make it less beautiful, or take away the charms of those fresh, broad fields that stretched away as far as my knowledge went of those unfrequented parts. Every morning the birds in the neighbouring trees warbled away their fill of joy, every evening the clouds in the west shaped themselves into palaces and mountains of glory on the bank of that gently flowing stream. It was pleasant of an evening to sit on the Ghat listening to the gentle ripples or looking at the stars as they peeped out through the bosom of the waters, or to be borne along on our little boat and look on at one



doesn't exactly know what. All these things I have left far, far behind, and there is nothing like them at the place where I am, and yet my mind is not filled with regret.

The life of a schoolmaster—it had been the object of fond hope and ambition to me, next to the life of a missionary. In idea at least it has always appeared to me that nothing is easier than to love, and nothing sweeter than to get back love in return; and what should I profit if I gain the whole world and yet my mode of life be one that does not permit the free exercise of this affection? And yet how often during my last days at Berhampore did I think that my parting advice to the boys, should a time of parting come, would be—Whatever else you do, my boys, be careful from the present that you may never have to be a schoolmaster in your life!

Death has been rather busy of late amongst the notabilities. While the words of invitation to his fellow countrymen were on his lips, and the hearty spirit of welcome went forth in advance of a year to meet them shaping the joys and hopes of the anticipated moment, there was a messenger with a more urgent call at home, waiting for Pundit Ajodhya Nath himself. The host is gone; who knows whether the feast is not to be broken up, the guests scattered, and in the place of happy greetings, and a closer union we are not to have mourners in black, parting in silence over a desolate grave yard with probably a tearful glance at each other, and the offer of a faded flower at the utmost over the tomb of the buried hopes of a nation! Another feast is broken up by the same inexorable signal, and there is wailing and rending of hearts where there was soon to be a bridal festivity in the Royal House of England. Alas for the unfortunate bride and alas for the unfortunate youth who is thus

suddenly cut off from the hope of the crown of the British Empire. And if in the case of the Khedive our personal feelings are not so deeply touched, who knows what far-reaching consequences affecting the destinies of a continent, and the fortunes of hundreds of thousands of people may not be involved in the death of that insignificant puppet who at least served to direct the attention of European nations from one another under the name of Tewfik Pasha?

Saturday, January 16, 1892.

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The Dacca Bribery Case—what an indication of the extreme rottenness of our society at the present day! The mystery that shrouds the whole affair will probably never be cleared up to human knowledge, and a deeper mystery must for ever veil the inner springs that are working within the minds of the persons involved, from the sight of man. But whatever view we may take of the matter what hideous alternatives of intrigues, contrivances, and impulses almost diabolic in their character are presented to us, and that in the very highest circles of native society. Would that we could console ourselves with the belief that this is a solitary case affording but slight ground for a generalisation regarding our society at large. Such a solitary corruption at an isolated point is but an indication of the volcanic materials that have accumulated under the surface through thousands of miles, nay who knows but the slight puff of smoke that now excites our curiosity is one day to overspread the whole sky, and amidst the agonised cries and shrieks of stifled souls, a whole nation is to be buried under heaps of ruins and ashes? Of liberty, and self-government, and political rights, and

congress resolutions we have had enough, but of what avail are these amongst a people who from the highest to the lowest live in an atmosphere of the narrowest selfishness, and the most unrestrained self-indulgence? Oh! for the voice of a Mazzini to teach this benighted people that in every true national development the conception of Duty must always precede and regulate the conception of Right; Oh! for the pen of a Carlye to preach in these days of thoughtless superficiality, the deep, irreversible truth that in the real march of progress, the reform of the man must always precede and regulate the reform of institutions!

Sunday, January 31st, 1892.

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So, the Viceroy takes an earnest interest in the Society for the Higher Training of Youngmen, and a subscription list headed by His Excellency is not likely to be short or meagre. Calcutta is to have a public library for students, with reading and lecture rooms and play-grounds attached. A happy thing in this age of culture for the youths of the town. When one contemplates the idea, and reflects upon the vast possibilities that this institution might be made the means of achieving, who does not yearn for being on the scene where this glorious vision is to be realized?

Sunday, January 31, 1892.

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Mr. Thomas Evans is certainly a very interesting figure. He was so long to me only a newspaper abstraction, —a symbol for a mass of statistics which were very skil-

fully directed against the Government, but I had no idea of that remarkable human element in him which yesterday's meeting revealed to me, and which fits him so characteristically for the battle he is fighting. A robust, jolly figure, full of

“Quips and Cranks and wanton Wiles  
Nods and Becks, and wreathed Smiles”

which in this case certainly hang upon cheeks enjoying the full graces of Hebe whom, Mr. Evans takes care to tell you, he worships with no other libation than pure “water and milk.” There is an utter absence of all touch of stiffness, and a charming sociability and a beaming vivacity and buoyancy about this descendant of the ancient Britons, “the true aristocracy of the United Kingdom.” “There will be few people here to-day you think, eh?” he said, when he came just at the appointed hour and found only empty chairs and benches in the hall; but there was no shade on his face nor any faltering in his voice, any more than when the hall gradually filled and in his own characteristic fashion, with humour, hope and earnest conviction bearing through every word, he addressed the audience composed of the elite of Bhagalpur Society. He was a Welsh clergyman, and the people at home had been calling him back ever since he came away but he had persistently given them the refusal, for his life was devoted to the service of the people of India, and all his energies must be directed towards the suppression of the monstrous evil of Drink in this land, where it had been introduced and was being indirectly encouraged by the mistaken economic policy of a so-called Christian Government, amongst a people whose habits, tradition and religious ideas were, in the case of Hindus and Mahommadans alike, opposed to this pernicious practice; and if he being a

foreigner was ready to die in this cause, was it not the duty of every native of India to make the cause his own—a duty imposed by the consideration of health and life, of national prosperity, the dictate of religion, and the highest principle of human nature—self-sacrifice? Convict women in the Andamans had shown that even their crime and its degrading punishment had not eradicated this principle from their nature, and men of position, influence, and culture were bound to show that they were not worse than these convict women in this respect. Such is the earnestness and pathos to which Mr. Evans's simple eloquence rises in the midst of its statistics and strokes of humour, and let us not quarrel with him if his enthusiasm sometimes carries him away into rather indifferent reasoning, as when he proved perfectly to his own satisfaction that there can be no use in liquor, since otherwise God would have given it to us in showers from heaven, or in wells and springs just alike the mineral waters in the wells and springs of his own native district of Wales!

Wednesday, Feb. 3, 1892.

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Apropos of the Temperance movement, I think it may be questioned how far the system of having pledges signed will answer its purpose, or rather how far it has a reasonable purpose as generally understood. I believe it was Sir Wilfrid Lawson who replied when asked "how many drunkards had been reclaimed by the system of pledges?" that we ought to consider not only the number of actual drunkards saved but also the number of those that would have been drunkards but for the pledges they took not to have recourse to drink. This would be a sufficient justification of the system in a country like

England where drinking is the rule and abstinence the exception; but when you make a demand for signing the pledge upon a person to whom the thought of drink never appeared amongst the remotest possibilities of his life, you violate alike all consideration of use, and the psychological principles upon which all sound moral discipline is to be based. The sense that one's honour is at stake may no doubt be of very great help as an additional motive to a person who is struggling to get rid of a temptation, but why force the temptation into one's mind by asking him to stake his honour for the non-commission of a sin which he never contemplated. It is one of the highest privileges of life to feel that we are altogether above certain temptations and weaknesses, and such a privilege in the strictest sense of the term is that enjoyed in reference to drink by every person brought up in a society in which drinking is rare or unknown, and since nothing is truer than that there is no instinctive craving in human nature for liquor in any form, it is gratuitous lowering of the moral standard to force such a person to take a pledge against drink. Mr. Evans justifies the system by saying that one, who does not drink himself, should take the pledge for the sake of others that do drink, but properly speaking if such a person is to take a pledge at all, let it be to the effect that he will by all means try to dissuade others from the evil practice. It is a fundamental principle of all moral culture that no moral resolution should be taken except what aims at raising the character to a higher level than it already occupies. A pledge to abstain from drink may of course be taken profitably by one who is addicted to the habit, or is in danger of being made liable to the temptation of drink but even then it can never take the place of the effort and struggle that proceeds from an independent sense of duty,

for a pledge can be of no effect unless accompanied by sincere penitence, and an earnest desire for reform.

Wednesday, Feb. 3, 1892.

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Swift thought his description of the Liliputians a sufficient satire upon the political quarrels and social intrigues of his age; he could not have made a greater mistake. It is not the dimensions of the body or the extent of their range that determine the pettiness or otherwise of the passions and their manifestations, because the infinitude of the mind transcends all limitations of space and lends its own expansibility to everything that is human; and considering the intensity of feeling alone, the agonies of a Prometheus torn by vultures are scarcely more tragic than the cries of a child as if its heart would break when scolded by its mother, as also our everyday experience teaches us that as felt simply in actual life there is no distinction between the Heroic and the mock heroic. Not by the opposition of larger and smaller in the scenes and appendages, but by the contrast between higher and lower in the inner springs of activity themselves, only when the passions are judged not by their intensity or range, but in the light of the higher ideals of life does the pettiness of man weaving cobwebs to entangle and frustrate his brother man come out clearly into view. In the absence of such ideals no one could be convinced that his little plans and intrigues were not what the whole creation had been made for, even though this earth were not larger than a Liliputian island and our hero a microspoic manikin lording it over an Empire, looking no bigger to a grosser vision than a grain of sand on the seashore.

Thursday, February 4, 1892.

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A number of circumstances coming one after another remind me that my life has hitherto been without a purpose. It is only a few days ago when last at Calcutta, I told M. in reply to a question of his, that though I couldn't see everything clearly, nay though the future was altogether hidden in the deepest obscurity and uncertainty, yet I believed that I was on the right track, that I could put faith and trust in the direction in which my life was drifting, I was perhaps not so far wrong or labouring under self-deception. We are probably often in the habit of too much depreciating the influence of circumstances upon a man's life. But a study of the life of even those whose existence has been a perpetual war against circumstances crowned with a final triumph, combined with what small experiences I myself have passed through, forces upon me the conviction that whether our attitude is one of compliance or defiance, it is circumstances that must give the shape and hue which our life is ultimately to assume. The nature of the reaction of the vital principle within upon the influences outside alone determines a man's inward character, but a man's life is a product of the combination of the two. We should perhaps be less loath to give circumstances their due, if instead of looking upon them as the ministers of an inexorable Fate, we take them for what they really are:—viz. dispensations of a wise Providence for giving direction and definite shape to the energies and impulses of our nature. Hence the duty of waiting and watching. But I should never forget that this waiting and watching is anything but a state of passivity, that it is not waiting alone but watching too.

Life has no meaning without companionship. Our



existence is a relation, and our character is a development which has a meaning and is possible only under a system of relations. There was a time perhaps in my life, when religion in the exclusive sense in which it is popularly understood was sufficient to constitute this relation, when silent contemplation, and solitary communion, and the ecstasy of love and devotion towards a sweet Personality felt within my own, might constitute a soul-satisfying purpose to live for. But since I gave up my habit of daily worship and devotions, I have wandered farther and farther away from such an ideal of life. During this time I have lost much of the tenderness and sweetness of sentiment that once suffused my soul, but I feel I have made a greater advance towards sincerity, truth, and may I not say—earnestness of conviction and faith too? God is no longer to me a solitary Being confined to a single spot, or a single moment or a single state of my mind, but I have learnt to feel His reality with my eyes open in the order and beauty of the universe, in the love that now a days comes to me so often unsought through so many channels, and above all in the thunder-like soul-crushing judgments that have so often come upon me and awakened me to my sin and wretchedness. I now feel that communion with Him has scarcely any meaning, unless I can properly regulate the many-sided relations of my life through every one of which my soul is in touch with His Being. And unless some at least of these relations become clear and definite, my attempts to have solitary communion with His Spirit, Which must always be the central light of my soul, are only fitful and fruitless, and these three or four years I have been waiting for the moment when should begin my permanent enjoyment of this blessed intercourse. Oh! how longer still shall I have to wait?

I do not know whether I have depended too much upon circumstances in regulating my relations towards my fellowmen. As yet I have only a very vague idea that it is not all right with our Society as it is. That the struggle, material and spiritual, is becoming harder and harder for the rising generation of our young men, and that the mercies that have been bestowed upon me from my childhood might some day enable me to contribute my humble share to the solution of the spinx-riddle. But how this is to come about, and in what way my life is to be saved from the curse of the fig-tree, the times are yet far from clearing up to me. Can I be of any use worth speaking of in my capacity as a Professor? Oh God! if my present situation be indeed in accordance with the harmony of Thy Law, help me to do my best, if perchance one wandering youth should get some light through me to find out his way withal in these dark dismal days that threaten to swallow up the body and soul of even the hardest and the most protected!

What little I have as yet actually done is perhaps with regard to my family. But oh! how very, very little that is.

Saturday, 6th August, 1892.

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A professor and a newspaper editor are very much in the same predicament. The latter must fill up so much space per day, the former so many hours. And since both have to minister to the tastes of a motley audience, woe to them if they fail to keep up their freshness of spirit from a source of perennial inspiration. They must otherwise either fail to command the attention of those they are addressing or gradually sink into cant sensationalism

and theatricality by trying to make up by verbosity and vociferation the want of deep thought and earnest appreciation of truth.

Sunday, 7th August, 1892.

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A letter from N. this morning as expected. Oh! shall I ever learn to be sufficiently thankful to that Love which has taken human shape specially, as it seems, to follow me even when I have wandered far away from its spiritual Fountain-head? When I think of this deep, sweet affection which might be a compensation for any evil incident to human life, how much ashamed do I feel of the bitterness that sometimes comes upon my spirit, and the complaints I am so frequently disposed to make!

Another birthday completing my twenty-fourth year; but while conscious of a vacuity within I am resolved not to fill it up by my own imaginations. But what of some work in life? Alas! isn't that rather the business of the Master than of the servant? No more of the snare of propagandism, humanitarianism, and the ransacking of the brain for having something grand to do. O God! save me from bitterness and despair, and while the spirit of sacrifice may not yet incarnate itself in life, let my heart at least be free from all tinge of selfishness!

Sunday, 25th September, 1892.

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Religion has never set its face against happiness. Even the doctrine of Nirvana had its origin in an attempt to solve the problem of human suffering, and the sermon

on the mount is not ashamed to speak of righteousness as essentially a state of blessedness. It is the proud individualism upon which stoicism stands that sets up an ideal of strength and dignity which is ashamed to accept any boon from Nature. The ideal of religion is a self-abnegation which means ineffable sweetness and peace. Stoicism means perpetual warfare. Religion is perpetual triumph. Stoicism is reason, conscience ; religion is Love. The motto of stoicism is "Terrar Dumprosim."—May I be wasted so I be of use ; whereas religion loves to take as its symbol the seed that falls to the ground and is crushed and rotten only to come forth again in beautiful flowers and fruits.

But everywhere in the discipline of human character Law must precede Love. Nay, the perception of a Higher irrespective of the Happier, must be the eternal law of human progress, and if the two are ultimately found to coincide it is not because the happier is the higher but because the higher must ever be the happier for man.

Tuesday, 4th October, 1892.

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In 1893, Benoyendra Nath left Bhagalpur on his being appointed a Lecturer in History at the Presidency College, Calcutta.

Babu Hari Prasanna Mukherji, Principal, Tej Narayan Jubilee College, Bhagalpur, thus writes to him on his resignation.

"Your colleagues and pupils can never forget you, so charming your manners were and so cordial your dealings with them. The reminiscence of your stay here will always be sweet to us, and we shall cherish the

associations with fondness. Warm affection and regard are the sentiments your friends (ourselves in the lot) entertain for you, and they will ever continue to do so. Wishing you always health, happiness and prosperity.

I remain,  
Yours most affectionately,  
HARI PRASANNA MUKERJI.

\* \* \* \* \*

“But his worth soon attracted the notice of that keen judge of merit, Sir Alfred Croft who brought him to the Presidency College. Thus began his memorable connection with the College which continued to the day of his death, with only a short interruption when he officiated in the post of the Inspector of Colleges. Not wishing to limit his exertions to the students of one College only, he found an opportunity of getting in touch with the whole student community of Calcutta, first as Hon. Deputy Secretary and then as Secretary to the Calcutta University Institute. This was only in the natural fitness of things, for he, being the spiritual successor of Pratap Chundra Mozumdar, was the fittest person to guide the Institution which owes its origin to Pratap Chandra. His unqualified success at the Institute is proved by the fact that though at the time he took charge of the Institution, the number of junior members had dwindled down to an insignificant figure, it rose to more than five hundred when he left it. His various services to the Brahmo Somaj and the cause of Theism in India need not be dilated upon here, but mention ought to be made of the great “pilgrimage” which he made to Europe and America as representative of the Brahmo Somaj to the International Religious Con-

ference held at Geneva in 1905. In this connection, he proved himself to be one of the blessed band of the true "Peace-makers" between the East and the West. He was eminently fitted for the task, for he understood thoroughly, and, perhaps, inherited to a great extent, the spirituality of the East and at the same time had a hearty appreciation of the more active and philanthropic ideals of the West. He was one of true interpreters of the East to the West and of the West to the East, as he understood and tried to assimilate the best elements of both and had a firm belief in the future growth of a common Humanity holding in its arms both the East and the West. He passed away after a protracted illness on April 12th, 1913, at the too early age of 45—at an age when most things were expected of him. But inscrutable are the ways of Providence and we have but to accept His decree in a spirit of resignation and trustfulness. The calm with which he bore the torments of the dire disease which carried him off bore ample testimony to the life of spirit in which he dwelt. The void created by his death, specially in the sphere of education, has not yet been filled up—I do not know whether it ever will be!

But nobody will be able to form a true idea of this high-souled gentleman from a mere narration of the principal events of his life, unless he had the good fortune to come into personal contact with him, for he was certainly greater than his career and his achievements. In order to help the present generation of students to catch a glimpse of this great man, it will not be out of place to refer to a few personal reminiscences of mine about him.

My memory carries me back to the early nineties when Benoyendra Nath, fresh from the College, was acting as the Headmaster of the Berhampur Collegiate School. He was living, at that time, with his cousin, the late Mohit

Ch. Sen, in a house adjoining our own. There was a passage between the two houses along the roof. Myself along with my elder brothers used to repair to his house as soon as he returned from the College, and many a glad evening did we pass there, listening to his instructive stories about the wonders of nature and of the heroic deeds of the great men of old times. But we used to take special delight in the magic-box pictures which he kindly brought from the College Laboratory to entertain us with. How childlike Benoyendra Nath was in spite of his vast learning and how easily and thoroughly he could be a boy with the boys. This accounts for his great success as an instructor of youth.

After an interval of several years, I next came into contact with him as a student of this College. Meaning no disrespect to any one, I think I may be permitted to say that he came, as nearly as is possible, to fulfilling the ideal of a professor. The instructions which came from his lips came with a doubled force on account of the nobility of his character, and at once carried conviction to our hearts owing to the evident earnestness and sincerity of the teacher. Who, among his students, can forget the electrifying influence of once coming into contact with him? None could escape his elevating influence. He imparted a dynamic force to all around him, and this strength he gathered from his moral eminence and living faith. In his class lectures, he always tried to rise superior to the mere teaching of the text-books and affect us more vitally in our real life. Studying History with him became the most liberalising and the humanising of all culture. For he always remembered that the true end of education was the building up of a perfect manhood, well-developed in all its different functions and capabilities. He was not a mere historian, but the truest

and the best student of History—the history which interprets and explains impartially all things that happen in time. Looking upon History from this high eminence, as he did, there was no room for narrowness or sectarianism in his instructions.

It must be admitted that he has not left any research work, and some have expressed regrets on that score. But I must confess I do not see any cause for regret in that. I should rather have been sorry if he had hidden himself in his study, engaged in some research work, and had left us poorer by withholding from us his ennobling company. Research workers may advance the country in knowledge, but there is a higher thing than knowledge and that is character. What Benoyendra Nath gave was much more precious—he endowed his students with character and inspired them with higher ideals of life. It should not be forgotten that though the encouragement to the spirit of research ought to be one of the aims of the University, it should not be carried too far at the cost of what is certainly the most important of its functions, viz. the imparting of a broad-based general culture to the future citizens of the state to enable them to pursue the ordinary different avocations and the building up of their character, which is both the fulcrum and the lever of all human actions. To give an undue importance to research in any University would be to neglect the needs of the many to meet the requirements of a very few—for how many amongst the thousands of those who flock to the University year by year, will devote themselves to a life of research? Further, too much specialisation in the scheme of studies to facilitate research work ends, in the long run, in frustrating the true aim of education by leaving the students with a very narrow outlook on men and things and making them very dogmatic in their one-



sided opinions. Unfortunately there has been strong tendency, of late, in this direction, and alas! we have no Benoyendra Nath—an apostle no less of culture as of faith—to fight against it!

Little need be said here about his success in his class-work. I remember, on one occasion he lectured on Tennyson's *Aylmer's Field* in one of the sections of the F.A. classes, and during his lecture, very few students could be found in the other section, as most of them had flocked to the 1st section to hear him. His was truly a literary temperament. Those that have heard him read his papers on Tennyson at the Y.M.C.A., certainly remember the music of his voice as he recited with feeling the lines from Tennyson and Rabindranath. True poetry dwelt deeply within his soul. Sometimes, I think that endowed as he was with such a highly emotional nature, perhaps he would have been a greater success as a professor of Literature. It was one of my hopes that he would live to write a critical appreciation of Rabindranath of whom he was a great admirer. But Fate willed it otherwise. It may here be further mentioned that one session he took the M.A. class in Logic with great success, and his lectures on Ethics and Natural Theology were highly prized by the students of that time.

But I think he could give us more of himself in his work outside the classes, viz. in the Debating Societies, in his Geeta Classes, in the steamer excursions and in the Social gatherings which he so often organized with such enthusiasm. It is here that he did most to broaden our intellectual education, to build our character and to inspire us with higher ideals of life.

The true explanation of the success which he achieved as a teacher must be found in his deeply religious nature, high moral tone and the sweetness of his temper. I had

never seen him ruffled or perturbed or ever using any harsh word to any of his students; and yet he was more willingly obeyed and respected than the sternest of disciplinarians. His discipline was based on love. He had a word of good cheer for every one of us. He was always accessible to the students, and they also used to resort to him in every difficulty. He made it a point to spend a great part of his time among the students, and knowing what little chance there was in the class for full and free intercourse between the professor and the students, he was always enthusiastically making arrangements for steamer parties and such other social excursions. I remember taking part in two of these. On one occasion, while sailing down the river in a boat, the Merchant of Venice and Rabindranath's 'গান্ধারীর আবেদন' were read out by the different members of the party. On the other occasion, we finished our boat-journey by taking 'খিচুড়ি' at the garden-house of Babu Kali Kissen Tagore. The poet Rabindranath also joined us there and delighted us by singing several of his most popular songs and reciting some of his poems. Coming out of the din and bustle and the smoke of Calcutta we enjoyed enormously the still, clear and fragrant atmosphere of the suburbs, and we had a taste of the peace that dwelt in the hermitages of the ancient Rishis of India. It was in these trips that we had an opportunity of coming close to the real man in Benoyendra Nath, and our hearts were won for ever by his sweetness and humility and by his deeply spiritual and highly refined nature. In this connection, I cannot help mentioning that with Benoyendra Nath gone, are gone also those joyous gatherings, which served as a balm to the vexed soul, to the sad loss of the student community of the present day.

On reviewing his whole career, one thought is suggested forcibly to our minds, and it is this: that the

one thing needful in a teacher lies neither in his intellectual alertness, nor in persuasive eloquence (though Benoyendra Nath was very rich in these), but in a spiritual elevation, in an earnest moral purpose and above all in a living faith, and in these Benoyendra Nath was unique among those who have taken up the sacred work of the education of the youth of our country.

In the death of Benoyendra Nath, the student community of Calcutta has truly lost its best "friend, guide and philosopher." I do not know when it will have such another. But I hope that in the imperishable memory of his own students he has left a high ideal of life, and traditions of which they will not willingly let die."

AN OLD PUPIL.

(Presidency College Magazine).

## CHAPTER V.

### YOUNG MEN'S PRAYER MEETING.

It was in the year 1893, when Benoyendra came to Calcutta and reorganized prayer meetings amongst the young men of the Church of the New Dispensation in Calcutta which were held at the *Peace Cottage*, Mr. Nagendra Chandra Mitra conducting the Divine Services. Here in *Peace Cottage*, for the first time did Promotho Loll (Nalooda) too come to publicly conduct Divine Services. Mohit Chunder also used to come from Hooghly almost every Saturday to join the meetings. Mr. Mitra was soon transferred to Patna. The older members of the *Prayer Meeting Group* were joined by Promotho Loll and during the next few years from 1894 to 1899 the history of this group centred round Promotho Loll, Benoyendra Nath and Mohit Chunder, the three together forming the *Trio* upon whom rested the hope and trust of the old and the new in the community. Before his joining this group Promotho Loll had never conducted services in public, and it was Benoyendra Nath who brought him out.

While the prayer meetings were being held at the Peace Cottage, later on it was decided to reorganise it on a grander scale. As a result of this the prayer meetings began to be held at the Bharatvarshiya Brahma Mandir, the three generally conducting the Upasanas. Bhai Kali Nath Ghosh, who had from this time began to attend the *Prayer Meetings* regularly, found inspiration in the services for his beautiful hymns. Besides Kali Nath there were others like Srijuts Provash Ch. Lahiri, Dayal Ch. Ghosh, Monomohan Chatterji, Amritananda Roy, Prasanta K. Sen and Bidhu

Bhushan Bose who sang in these meetings. Promotho Loll's *Aradhana* and Common Prayer brought comments from some of the younger members of the group. In his *Aradhana* it was the *Premaswarupa* of the Deity through which came to him the vision of every other *Swarupa*, and in place of the Congregational Prayer he would repeat the Lord's Prayer in Bengali. Benoyendra and Mohit insisted on Promotho Loll's conducting the services and so up to the time of his leaving India for England he went on conducting the *Upasana* in his own way. The Journal "Young Man" was revived in July of this year. Besides the prayer meetings, there were regular *Alochanas* in the "Good Will Fraternity" meetings in the Albert School. In April 1895, *The Young Man* and *The Interpreter* became one paper, and in October of the same year the three friends Benoyendra, Kali Nath and Promotho Loll undertook a long pilgrimage visiting, among other places, Benares, Sarnath, Lucknow, Hardwar, Allahabad, Cawnpur, Agra, Delhi, Lahore and Amritsar. They conducted services and delivered addresses in several places in the course of their pilgrimage. It was about this time that the Rev. J. T. Sunderland, deputed by the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, came to India, and soon after the Brahmo Samaj Committee was formed from amongst the three Brahmo Samajes for the purpose of having some sort of a permanent organisation for co-operation between the Brahmo Samaj and the British and Foreign Unitarian Association.

By way of giving effect to some of the proposals made for the purpose, the B. F. U. Association offered a scholarship of £100 a year for a young man of ability, high character and religious earnestness, for two years' study of Theology and Philosophy, at the Manchester College, Oxford.

Rev. Bhai Protap Chunder Mozoomdar was elected as its first Secretary and Benoyendra Nath acted as his assistant. A famine broke out in Central India and a few members of the Brahmo Samajes, headed by the Rev. Bhai Brojo Gopal Neogy, were deputed there for relief work. This famine relief work was organized by the above Brahmo Samaj Committee, and Benoyendra Nath as its Assistant Secretary was very successful in raising money for the purpose and the volunteers did their work most zealously with heart within and God overhead.

A Theological College was also started under the Presidentship of the present Maharajadhiraj of Burdwan.

About this time the manuscript journal "*Morning Star*" was again revived by some of the members of the Group—this time Srijut Monmohan Chatterji taking the initiative. But the most memorable event in the history of this Group in the year 1896 was the departure of Promotho Loll from India. He was unanimously selected as the first scholar for the Manchester College Scholarship. It was an occasion which brought out in a beautiful manner the place which Promotho Loll had come to occupy in the hearts of the young and the old alike. In the course of a week the money needed for the passage and the outfit was raised. Farewell meetings were organised at the Mandir, the Peace Cottage and the Albert School. The farewell given by the "Good Will Fraternity" was the most touching, Bhai Kali Nath composing a hymn "তোমার ঐ নাম ল'য়ে, রূপা ভিখারী হ'য়ে, ভাসিব অকুল তুফানে, যা হবার তাই হবে, তোমারি জয় হবে, তোমারি মঙ্গল বিধানে," specially for the occasion. The touching words of Benoyendra, Mohit, Satyendra and others melted the hearts of all. A great wave of spiritual enthusiasm and mutual love swept over the little band of young men transfiguring all ; and there is no doubt that it served the purpose of a genuine

spiritual revival among the members of this *New Prayer Meeting Group*.

The thoughts, which were working in Benoyendra Nath's mind during this period and which guided him in the conduct of his life then, may be well gathered from the writings left in his note-books and which are therefore quoted below :—

Friday, the 16th August, 1895.

I have often felt disposed to question why people should attach so much importance to the moment of death. “দয়াময় নাম গানে যেন প্রাণ অন্ত হয়” has been the earnest aspiration of many a devout soul. The way, however, in which some people seem to detach the particular moment of death from the rest of their life, and express their anxiety that all their faith and devotion may be concentrated in that moment, as if their eternal salvation depends upon that alone, and not upon the whole tenour of their life, may naturally lead one to question how far the feeling is a healthy one. But there are occasions when the feeling comes upon the mind with a deep truth and significance. Alas, the moments of genuine devotion are so rare in our life. In the midst of our habitual sins, and unbeliefs, and wickednesses, if by some special grace we happen to be in such a moment when we feel that God has not forsaken us, on the contrary how infinitely near His Spirit is to ours, the thought that fills our soul at the moment is that there may be nothing to disturb that consciousness to the day of our death, yea, even that our whole life may be such that this consciousness may be the deepest and the sweetest at that awful moment when the known mingles with the Unknown, and our life sinks into the darkness of Eternity. Happy is the man in whom no tinge of anxiety is mixed up with this thought. But in the case of one who knows

from bitterest experiences of the past how full his life is of snares and pitfalls, how unspeakably weak and helpless he is in the midst of the temptations of the world, the thought of passing again into the outer darkness from that Presence of sweetness and light is too over-whelming, and may he not deserve to be pardoned if in the agony of his soul he cries—"Now let Thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have beheld Thy salvation?" But the breath of life Thou hast not taken away, O Lord, though Thou knowest how every moment it is in danger of being polluted by the foul atmosphere I live in. If Thou art with me one moment, is not that moment in itself infinite and eternal, and does it not contain the promise that Thou wilt be always with me in this poor, sinful life of mine? Not in vain self-confidence or thoughtless security, but neither in that agonized anxiety which proceeds out of want of faith and kills all life and energy, but with a wholesome trembling and a calm dependence upon Thy love, let me take up the humble duties of my life, and bless me, out of Thy infinite mercy and love, that I may be *faithful unto death*.

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Saturday, the 17th August, 1895.

Is it because I am so ungrateful that I so often and so intensely feel the necessity of being alone? I know I have the love of my parents, and love of my friends in a measure which makes me dumb with wonder how such things could be possible. And yet I am never so much at home as when I am alone in my room with the doors bolted fast, and within my darkened soul in every throbbing of my heart, I feel the presence of Him Whose love never forsakes me for a moment. To be deprived of this privilege of being left entirely to myself in the inner sanctuary of the soul would,



at any time of my life, mean death to me. I can not think of any relation in life—not even the closest friendship, the relation of husband and wife, or of spiritual master and disciple, or any other relation—that could dispense with the necessity of being alone. And yet I know Thou art not an abstraction, O God, and as in the lonely darkness of my inmost soul, so in the hard realities of my everyday life I shall have to realize Thee. In the rebuking voice of my friends I shall have to recognize Thy voice; in the censure of the world, yea, even this blind, unsympathetic world which is so often so wrong and unjust, I shall have to search out Thy Judgment; in the mad crushing whirlwinds of my life I shall have to feel Thy loving presence. If I flee away from these into the calm of Thy sweet, tender bosom, let it not be because I am foolish enough to expect to find therein the perpetual rest of ignoble quietude, but that my spirit may be strengthened, and my eyes catch that light from Thy presence whereby in this world of light and shade, in connection with my own life as well as that of others, I may have the true vision to perceive how much of it is Thy Judgment and how much Thy Mercy, and behold in both the expression of Thy sweet and infinite Love!

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Sunday, midnight,

The 18th August, 1895.

N-'s *upasana* at Peace Cottage tonight came to me with the sweetest charm. There was nothing particularly new about the ideas or the wording, but it was the freshness of the spirit gently breaking, like the dawn, into clearer and brighter glow through that silvery succession of words, that was so impressive and charming. I kept no note of time, but perhaps the *upasana* was rather a long

one. But throughout its whole length it was one sustained act of concentration which filled equally the soul of the speaker and the listener without leaving any room for wandering or listlessness. What impresses me most is the unspeakable depth of feeling that lies hidden at the bottom of the soul, while the expression is severely chaste, and filled with the sweetness and pathos that are the outcome of the most spontaneous and unconscious self-restraint. I have no words sufficient to characterize this language—it is the language of the highest poetry,—it seems to me to realize what Ruskin says is the characteristic of the first order of poets.

“It is no credit to a man that he is not morbid or inaccurate in his perceptions, when he has no strength of feeling to warp them; and it is in general a sign of higher capacity and stand in the ranks of being, that the emotions should be strong enough to vanquish, partly, the intellect, and make it believe what they choose. But it is still a grander condition when the intellect also rises till it is strong enough to assert its rule against, or together with, the utmost efforts of the passions; and the whole man stands in an iron glow, *white hot, perhaps, but still strong, and in no wise evaporating; even if he melts, losing none of his weight.*”

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Monday.

What a pity it is that there are people even amongst the younger generation who can not partake in this *upāsana* with a thorough unreservedness of spirit simply because it is not in what they call the *proper* form. Leaving aside all questions of *propriety* which seem to me utterly meaningless and improper in this connection, and considering only the fact that the people who complain are

*accustomed* to the old order and form, and find it somewhat difficult to adapt themselves to any changes in the matter, I have been sometimes troubled with the thought whether their complaint, considered as an expression of weakness, does not deserve some consideration ; and I have even some times felt inclined to argue with N—about the matter. I think that N—himself must admit that when a definite order of service has become dear to the soul, in consequence of the deepest feelings of devotion that a person is capable of being cast into that mould, any change in that order must produce some kind of disturbance, unless the mind is specially prepared against it by a wide and deep capacity for sympathy, trust, and self-surrender. Witness N—'s own virtual incapacity for changing his own order. And we must remember that the form these people are fighting for is not entirely a dead tradition. How far it is instinct with life and truth in their own hands might be doubted. But the time has not passed out of their memory when it was to them the living symbol and channel of the intense spiritual life that flowed into them out of that Soul all aglow with divine light which was the one supreme Influence they knew by which their whole existence was moulded down to the innermost fibres of their being. So much on the side of these poor people. (I must for myself confess that the old form and order are dear to my soul as my own heart's blood, though I must say with thankfulness that has not prevented my giving myself up into N's *upāsana* with perfect self-surrender). But what about N—himself? It was on some indirect urging of my own, I think, that he sometime ago made the attempt to bring himself under the rules of conformity. But after two or three efforts he gave up the experiment. And now I can think of nothing more heartless and cruel than to urge upon him doubts and arguments which, I fear, may have

the effect of disturbing the spontaneity and concentration of that sweet out-flowing of his spirit in devotion. Alas, for the poor people who have not trust and freedom enough to know and welcome a thing into their hearts when it comes from God; and alas, for the household of the New Dispensation, where in this time of desolation and barrenness, it seems as if under the influence of some perverse spirit of evil all things are destined to *diverge* and none to *converge*!

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Tuesday, the 20th August, 1895.

How significant it seems to me that in reading the sweet narrative of the life of Jesus in Matthew's gospel, the first thing that one comes upon is the Sermon on the Mount. It was but the opening of his ministry. The weird voice of John in the wilderness calling them to repentance was still ringing in the ears of men. They had not yet listened to the New Preacher. Who can say what was there about the face and figure of this Man that even before he had "opened his mouth," Peter and John left their nets and followed him, and the multitudes gathered about him in earnest expectation? "And seeing the multitudes he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: And he *opened his mouth*, and taught them, saying, "Blessed are the poor in spirit for their's is the Kingdom of Heaven." After the dark gropings of the spirit answered by flaming flashes in the bush and deep thunderings on the mountain-top of the older revelation, after its awe and suspense, the rigour and austerity of the Law, the denunciations and lamentations of the Prophets, how sweet did thy words, O Jesus, shine through the darkened atmosphere of the hills and lands of Judea! Was it like the soft rays of the moon piercing

through the parted clouds in some stormy midnight; or was it like the sweetest approach of dawn, calling forth a new life of light and joy after the hideous dreams and nightmares of a troubled sleep! Generations have blessed thee for those words of comfort and life; and with the deepest gratitude in my deep sinfulness let me bless thee too that thou hast spoken words of hope unto sinners like me.

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Saturday, night,

The 24th August, 1895.

To-morrow they are going to celebrate the *Bhadrotsaba*. I have my reasons long settled for deciding not to attend it, and I should not probably have thought much of the matter by myself; but the look of those wistful faces at the Prayer Meeting this evening with the forced silence, broken here and there by a word or two on the subject, indicating what everybody was thinking of, brings rather sad and troubled thoughts into my mind. They all looked so much to say: "Are you not coming to-morrow? We hope you will, but yet how sure almost we are you will not, and how sorry we are for it!" Strange it is that there should be this hurting of each other where God knows there is nothing but the tenderest love, and my soul pants for having such matters cleared up as soon as possible. But can I so state my reasons as to convince all?

I have not the least quarrel with the *upasana* of anybody provided he worships and prays in sincerity and in truth, and I can believe how it will be of good to those who attend any *upasana* of this kind at any place. It is with a conviction somewhat like this that most of our young friends attend the Saturday Prayer Meeting, and

they attend the service in the *mandir* also, I think, from this spirit. In connection with the former they are sometimes troubled with questions about church-organization and church-discipline ; but I do not know whether they have reflected with sufficient seriousness that such questions, while they are somewhat out of place in connection with the former, have their true bearing and importance only in relation to the latter. Never for a moment do I expect that these tender-hearted youths, I might almost say children, should at once decide these questions for themselves, specially as the questions arising out of the present state of our church are so subtle, and so mixed up with personalities as to be insoluble without a knowledge of, and insight into personal character, and an amount of spiritual freedom, not to be expected in every body. The responsibility, nevertheless, of deciding these questions must in every case be very great ; and greater in proportion as the opportunities of acquiring the required knowledge and freedom are greater. And from every one who has the intention of becoming in right earnest a member of the household of the New Dispensation, these questions must, at sometime or other, demand a firm and unwavering answer.

The first of these, and round which, avowedly at least, all others centre, is the Vedi question. Apart from all party quarrels, and the troubles to which it has given rise, I should think, for myself, that keeping the Vedi vacant is a symbol that ought not to be permitted within the Church. Symbols have their use and importance, nay, when properly regarded, they are and ought to be looked upon with love and reverence. I may go further and say that all their use and importance depend upon their being looked upon as objects of love and sanctity and reverence. For this reason, I believe no one has the right of forcing a symbol

upon another ; all that a person can do in this matter is to make suggestions from his own experience leaving the actual choice in the hands of each individual. Hence I think that all church service and church arrangements should be as pure and simple as possible, and free from every kind of *necessary* symbolism. No one has the right of introducing anything *permanently* into the Church, which he himself admits to be *non-essential*. Everybody is perfectly at liberty to use any kind of symbolism he likes, in the right spirit, in his own private devotions. But whatever you set up permanently in a church becomes immediately a *test* for including or excluding people. Now mark a thing which according to temperament or training or personal preferences *may* or *may not* be acceptable to a person while his faith remains pure (and such a thing every one in our church must admit a symbol as a mere symbol to be) can never be set up as a test. For when so set up it will keep out of the house of God persons who by the unmistakable certificate of God Himself belong to His household. And remember that every one who sets up such a test, and every one who supports it, will have to answer to God for keeping out, by his blind arbitrariness, God's own children from His house !

So much for the question itself apart from all party differences. Even if the Durbar had been unanimous upon the point, and even if that unanimity had been kept up to the present day, it would have no right to force its own decision, in a matter like this, upon the congregation. The matter is eminently one in which it is not enough that there should be unanimity in the Durbar ; but there must be harmony between the Durbar and the congregation also in order that any practical decision may be arrived at. Was the congregation ever referred to, nay, so much as even thought of, was its sense ever thought worth consult-

ing, its position worth considering, its present and future worth reflecting upon, in the whole course of these long, tiresome disputes in the church? I am not speaking of the rule of majority; but of the right of even the humblest worshipper not to be driven away from the church of God by the setting up of a test which is not a test. In the name of the congregation and by the Heaven-endowed rights of the congregation, the Vedic resolution is null and void. And for every child of God that has been kept out of His house during these long years, by these quarrels and disputations, and the setting up of this false test, those that have done it will have to answer, answer to God, yea, answer to Keshub Chunder Sen.

For *his* teaching is sufficiently plain as to what is a test and what is not. What can be richer and fuller and sweeter than the multiform symbolism of the New Dispensation which he brought in and enlivened with life-giving fire from Heaven? For every craving of the soul, for every instinct of devotion, his inspired ceremonial furnishes some visible food and vesture. Every act and occurrence of our daily life, every function of the body, every relation in which we may be placed is transformed and idealized by his spiritual symbolism so as to become an opening into Heaven, and make our life and the whole universe the visible garment of God. But all this rich and sweet symbolism he looked upon as a help to and an embodiment of special devotional culture, and he kept it, in its different elements, for those who were fit to receive them. But never did he keep the spectre of a symbol at the gate (unless you take the flag of the New Dispensation to be such!) to scare away poor and innocent people from the house of God. Witness the simplicity of the form of initiations, the simplicity of the church service, the simpli-



city of all the constant and permanent church arrangements made by him.

Then if we ask what sort of a symbol is the vacant Veda, and what use has been made of it during these long years,—what is the answer? The whole value of a symbol consists in its representing some spiritual fact. And you must remember the fact must not be simply a fact of the intellect, it must be a fact of the heart. The only justification for the use of symbolism in religion is the presence of some exalted emotion, some deep, mystic, spiritual experience which transcends the ordinary methods of embodiment in simple prose. Where you have only a dry, intellectual belief, it will be a sham and an affectation if you employ any other method than simple prose for its expression. You may believe, or try to believe that your food and drink *ought* to be symbols of the flesh and blood of the Son of God, and you are perfectly justified in giving expression to this belief in simple, matter of fact language ; but if you have never actually *felt* that mystic experience in your life and character, you have no right to desecrate by your false handling the sacred ceremony of the Eucharist. A symbol, when it is a true one, is mixed up with the tenderest feelings of the heart, for then it ceases to be what it is in appearance—a mere thing of sight and touch, and becomes filled with a mystic power which reaches the inmost depths of the soul and reveals through dull, dead matter the beauties of Heaven. And just as no one has the right of thrusting by force his own symbol upon another making it an article of faith for the whole church and the basis of a Test Act ; so on the other hand nothing can be more cruel than to deprive a person, even though it were by the collective force of the whole congregation against a single individual, of a symbol that is to him sweet and

real and the gate of Heaven. Nay, further, when any person in the course of his spiritual culture has found out any deep significance and beauty in a symbol, it is his duty and unquestionable right if he feels a special call in his soul to that effect, to explain that symbol and reveal its beauty painted in the colours of his own heart's blood, before the assembled congregation in the church. From this point of view, it is quite conceivable that just after the departure of the beloved Minister, the whole body of apostles should be led, under the impulse of a deep and sacred emotion, to keep apart the Minister's seat in the church, with due humility and reverence, as a sign to proclaim, not only to the assembled congregation but to the whole world, their deep sense of the reality and nearness of their eternal relation with the Minister. But how does the matter stand now? The symbol is there, and they say they are ready to shed their blood for it, but the fact it was meant to represent has shrunk into a dead and dry intellectual dogma, not even a clear intellectual belief, not to speak at all of a vivid realisation of the heart. They have kept the *Vedi* vacant, but they care not to reflect how far they have succeeded in making people love the Minister, and be drawn nearer to his spirit. Devoid of all spirit, and life; and significance, the symbol is left there as a piece of dry bone,—nay, even as such it is placed so as to be out of public sight, as the merest apology for a symbol,—or rather as a symbol not of an ever-present, ever-real relation, but of a resolution that was once passed—a symbol not of the spirit of love and faith and reverence. If thou hast found a symbol, my Brother, which in its material littleness reflects for thee the infinite beauty of Heaven, cherish it as the sweetest and dearest treasure of thy soul, leave it not in the dust and hide it not in a corner! If thy *Gairik* has really the mystic charm of

translating thee into the presence of the love-intoxicated ascetic of Nuddea, keep it clean and pure, so that when thou putteth it on, thy blood may be quickened and thy body feel that it is in contact with some unearthly touch. And if the vacant *Vedi* be indeed for thee an opening through which thou beholdest the reality of the presence of thy minister, bathe it with thy tears, strew it with flowers, and in the name of common sense, do not put it into the back-ground of a hole where the eyes of none can see it, and thy own mind can scarcely remember its presence.

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Give me strength and firmness. Make the covering of this bosom as of steel. Pardon me, O merciful God, if ever in any moment of weakness, under the passing shade of some thoughtless mood, I have spoken or thought lightly of death. I will live, because it is Thy world into which Thou hast brought me,—not that I may always think only of the difficulties and obstructions that there are in the way, not that I may vainly speculate upon what others think or how others feel,—but that I may live in Thy light and be happy in Thy love. Take away all vanity and self-importance, and humble me down to the dust, but make me steady and firm as the rock that I may never, never betray the trust Thou hast imposed on me.

Wednesday, 6th May, 1896.

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Perhaps it was only a passing shadow, only a too-easily-excited apprehension of my mind. Most probably it was a serious warning. But may I never forget what I was given to feel and learn yesterday. What a blessed experience it is to feel one's self so near to death. The

mind is composed beyond expectation or expression. All the vanities, and misgivings, and gropings of the mind are hushed and stilled. The judgments and suspicions of the world, or whatever else there may be in it, absolutely touch you not. Only a sense of the judgment of the All-merciful filling the whole soul, the whole heart and mind. If my work is not done, will the world suffer thereby? It is an impious vanity to think that it will. Are there any who will suffer if I am not here to help them? It betrays want of faith if there is not the balm of a perfect calm and rest in my tears. Am I fit to be ushered into the awful depths of Eternity? It is not mine to answer this question, but His Who always does what is fittest. Apart from all such questions, there is only one deep-seated unrest in my soul—I had a trust to fulfil, and I have yet done nothing to fulfil it—a particular debt of love and devotion and gratitude sealed and witnessed unto by all my highest aspirations and efforts, by all that is heavenly and divine in my nature, by all that is purest, noblest and best in my ideal of humanity,—a special claim upon my whole nature, and life and powers and energies, which remains unanswered. Nothing can mitigate the anguish of the thought of passing away from the world without fulfilling this trust.

To-day the cloud has passed away. But bless me, O Father, that I may never forget Thy warning, or lapse again into the sin from which it has raised me.

Thursday, 7th May, 1896.

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In every thought and act you ought so to hold yourself, as if you were going to die this very day. If you had a good conscience, you would not much fear death. It would be more to the purpose to shun sin than to flee from death.

"What profit is it to us to live long, when we make such a poor use of our time? Ah! a long life does not always bring with it amendment but it often increases our guilt."

"Blessed is he who has always before his eyes the hour of death, and daily disposes himself for death."

THOMAS A KEMPIS.

Wednesday, 13th May. 1896.

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" 'Nobody in these days,' says my poor friend, 'has the least notion of the sinful waste there is in talk, whether by pen or tongue. Better probably that King Friedrich had written no verses; nay I know not that, David's Psalms did David's Kingship any good!' Which may be truer than it seems. Fine aspirations, generous convictions, purposes,—they are thought very fine: but it is good, on various accounts, to keep them rather silent, strictly unvoiced, except on call of real business, so dangerous are they for becoming conscious of themselves! Most things do not ripen at all except underground. And it is a sad but sure truth, that every time you *speak* of a fine purpose, especially if with eloquence and to the admiration of bystanders, there is the *less* chance of your ever making a fact of it in your poor life."

CARLYLE.

Thursday, 14th May, 1896.

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Be not anxious, my soul, that thou shalt ever be removed from the holy influence of pain in thy life. It is a delusion to suppose that by taking thought we can give ourselves pain by way of punishment, or penance, or discipline. Our sufferings as well as our joys are not,

and can never be of our own making. God alone is the source of all pain, as He is the fountain of all joy. Thy Heavenly Father knows all thy secret sins, and weaknesses, and failings, and He alone knows how to punish thee, and stir thee, and make thee strong. Have trust in Him, and keep thine eyes wide open, and thou shalt never have to complain of the absence of influences to chasten thee and draw thee nearer and nearer unto Him.

Friday, 15th May, 1896.

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What business have I to trouble myself with so many anxious cares about so many things? Let the world crack, and all the things around me be in a mad whirl, can that be any pretext to me for not filling my soul with love and purity, and pursuing my own quiet course as appointed by Heaven? Not that I may keep home and shut myself up and seek an ignoble, hateful peace, but that I should plunge myself into this mad whirlpool, is the destiny that the Voice from above calls me to.

O God, give me love and purity. Deep, quiet love that is never ruffled, because it seeketh not its own, and like the deep, serene sky, is not afraid to meet the whirlwind and the thunder storm. And purity that has the courage to be honest, and straightforward, and decline itself to be what it is, and shrinks not from the suspicions, and taunts, and judgments of men, because it feels that they can not touch it, yea, even as on the bed of death.

Saturday, 16th May, 1896.

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My soul, if thou indeed lovest thy God, be not afraid to look the world in the face. Mysterious and charmingly wonderful are the ways of Providence appointed for the training and discipline of men. For every man that

aspires to love and serve Him, He has appointed a huge, dark spectre that follows him day and night, perhaps through life. It looks like a monster that comes from outside to devour thee, but in reality it is a shadow proceeding out of thine own heart, which from a mere speck gradually assumes formidable proportions till it threatens to cover the whole face of the earth. Its name is Doubt. If in my heart I feel that my God is with me, and I am unspeakably happy in His blessing, it comes and says: is it not a mere illusion? If through prayer I feel that my whole being is my Master's, and no life is possible for me except through perfect self-consecration—it laughs and says: "I know thee better." When my soul is lashed unto death and my whole heart is cut up in agony and anguish, it laughs at my tears, and when I feel a sort of unearthly calm even in the midst of my sins, in the sense of the all-encompassing judgment of Him Who is the Fountain of Mercy, it reproaches me with self-indulgence and want of repentance. When in the darkness of my soul, and the exceeding darkness of the world outside me, I can not see my way, and anxiously pray and wait for the Light which is the light of mine eyes and the strength of mine arms, it reproaches me with indolence and worldimindedness; and when at last a ray of light breaks forth through the gloom of my heart and I pour forth my whole being in an ecstasy of love and hope, and my soul rejoices at the sight of heavenly flowers that spring up around me, it comes gliding slowly like a bruised serpent with dark insinuations of pride and self-will. Often, often have I sought refuge from the hands of this Tormentor in the *silent* bosom of God, and let me always cherish with the deepest gratitude the thought of the hope and encouragement I have derived, therefrom. But the permanent remedy is not there. Here

is this other bosom of God—roaring, rushing, tempestuous, full of the darkest tumults—but still the bosom of the same Father where thou shalt have to grapple with this giant spectre, yea, wrestle with it either unto death or unto everlasting life. Seek not to avoid it, flee not from it like a coward, because it is thy destiny to meet it and crush it if indeed thou hast the blessing of God,—and let henceforth thy motto be—Death or Victory.

Monday, 25th May, 1896.

(The substance of these reflections—taken up on Tuesday the 19th May ; but kept aside for interruption,—was given out at Goberdanga—on Wednesday, the 20th May, 1896).

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“I must needs glory, though it is not expedient ; but I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ, fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I know not ; or whether out of the body, I know not ; God knoweth), such a one caught up even to the third heaven. And I know such a man (whether in the body, or apart from the body, I know not ; God knoweth), how that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. On behalf of such a one will I glory : but on mine own behalf I will not glory, save in my weaknesses. For if I should desire to glory, I shall not be foolish ; for I shall speak the truth : but I forbear, lest any man should account of me above that which he seeth me to be, or heareth from me. And by reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelations—wherefore, that I should not be exalted over-much there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, that I should not be exalted overmuch. Concerning this thing I



besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me. And he hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the strength of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."

Tuesday, 26th May, 1896.

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"Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying.

Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.

Then said I, Ah, Lord God! behold, I can not speak: for I am a child.

But the Lord said unto me, say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord.

Then the Lord put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth."

JEREMIAH.

Monday, 1st June, 1896.

(Sunday, 31st May, 1896).

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In October 1896, during the Pooja holidays, a party was organised of several members of the Young Men's Prayer Meeting to visit Chittagong and its neighbourhood.

The party consisted of Srijuts Lalita Mohan Roy,

Kali Nath Ghosh, Mohit Chandra Sen, Kshetra Mohan Sen, Jnanendra Mohon Sen, Suresh Chandra Bose, Lalit Mohan Chatterjee, Benoyendra Nath Sen and his younger brother Satyendra Nath. They were joined afterwards from Chittagong town by Srijuts Beni Madhab Das, Jogendra Nath Gupta and Kailas Chandra Dutt. It was a sacred pilgrimage full of enjoyments and festivities.

The party started from the house of Benoyendra Nath at 23, Bhowani Charan Dutt Lane, after partaking of their breakfast at the place. It was announced in the morning paper that a cyclone was approaching the Saugor Point and the party were rather in a hesitating mood. On arriving at the Steamer Ghat, on finding the steamer about to start, they all went on deck the steamer after bidding adieu to friends and relations. The captain of the steamer was kind enough to secure a neat, clean, secluded corner on the deck for the party where they were very nicely and comfortably accommodated. This was their first sea-voyage and all were so very delighted at the bright, pleasant prospect in view and the cool, bracing air of the wide mouth of the river so very enkindled the hunger-fire that they all sat to do justice to the plentiful stores so thoughtfully provided for.

The steamer proceeded in full speed, not apprehending in any way the on-coming cyclone prophesied to cause fright and gloom in the hearts of the nervous passengers but the joyful strides in the midst of a calm water and bright sunlit horizon made them more the merrier and enjoy the voyage to their hearts' fullest content.

On the eve of the day, as the steamer was approaching the Saugor Point it suddenly came to a standstill. All were taken aback and the latent fright of a disastrous happening began to take shape and make all stupefied and gloomy. The sea and the horizon showed the appearance

of a calm before a storm and all were hushed. There went on flag-signalling from the Sea-office and the crew kept mute to all questionings from the passengers.

After a lapse of about a quarter of an hour or so, the steamer was found to resume its course. Now, on enquiring it was ascertained that a cyclone was coming from the sea and the steamer was stopped to avoid it and as the cyclone had passed in a different direction, the steamer was allowed to proceed. As the sun was setting, the steamer entered the deep waters of the sea. All were anxious to look at the glorious sun-set, not into the depths of water but into the distant horizon of the land. The varied colours which adorned the sky at the moment kept the lookers-on enchanted and speechless. The waves, now, began to make the ship roll and dance and the passengers were forced to sit down on the deck finding it not possible to be on their legs any longer.

With the dancing of the waves and the ship thereon, the hearts of the passengers leapt with joy and rose in admiration and adoration of the Loftiest of all and began to sing hymns and worship Him Whose throne the biggest waves were trying but failed to approach. They thought, they mused, they adored the Endless, the Boundless, the All Mighty Whom neither the vast ocean nor the seemingly endless horizon could encompass. The tiny souls of the worshippers climbed higher and higher, getting broader and broader to prepare temples and thrones therein for the Mighty, the Infinite Being, the Creator of the vast Universe, the only Adorable of the worshipfuls.

So the pilgrims sat and worshiped Him Who is Omnipresent and Who pervades all land and waters and sky and offered their heartiest thankfulness for His all-abounding grace and mercy in giving them this opportunity to see Him in all His grandeur and majesty.

After the night's meal, they all went on talking, vociferating and amusing themselves with pleasant conversation, till late in the night sleep could overpower them.

Every soul was eager to have a look at the sun-rise from the deck and all were astir in the very early dawn, moving onwards to the fore front of the deck. From this position of vantage they could see the glorious Orb rising slowly from the depths of the water and Kali Babu singing morning *Bhajans* the worship of the Divine Father commenced, all standing, the other passengers still enjoying their sleep.

All around, the horizon embracing the deep waters, no sight of land any where, a sight first in their life, made them to meditate and comprehend the vastness of the Universe, to engross the Infinite, if possible, within their finite souls, till at last the finite worshippers lost themselves in the Infinite Whom they worshipped. They all bowed down their heads in gratitude for this bliss which the Merciful Father in Heaven showered upon them in this their first sea-voyage. In the afternoon the passengers landed at the port of Chittagong where they were most cordially received by their friends and relations consisting of Beni Babu and others. The pilgrims were comfortably accommodated in the spacious rooms of the Govt. Normal School. In the kind and hearty hospitality of Rai Kailas Chandra Das Bahadur, Sjs. Rajeswar Gupta, Kashi Chandra Gupta, Beni Madhab Das, Kailash Chandra Dutt and others, many of whom, alas, are no longer in this land of the living, the pilgrims were enthroned in the midst of comforts and entertainments to their fullest satisfaction. *Kirtans* led by Kali Babu, Divine Services and lectures by Benoyendra Nath and Mohit Chandra, sweet conversations led by Lalit Babu and others, were many in the programme adopted during this pleasant sojourn. Huge

waves were seen dancing in full merriment on the deep waters, their impulses, no doubt, were well perceived by the passengers on the deck of the ship, and the pleasant feelings and the blissful thoughts which were awakened in their minds out of love and affection to one another in this sweet company, were no less in their depth and height and the happy enjoyments were left deep-rooted, never to be forgotten in their life.

After a short stay in the town, the party left to visit the picturesque neighbourhood of hills and valleys. The valleys of *Bariadhala* presented natural sceneries not seen before, adorned with vegetations so varied and engrossing in their picturesqueness, the sparkling waterfall of *Sahasradhara*, glistening and refracting the thousand rays of the sun in all the beautiful colours of a rainbow, the joyous, triumphant marches and climbings towards the *Sitakundu* and up the *Chandra Nath* hill ; the mirthful dives into the stagnant waters of *Barabkundu* where the hell fire was burning, the nice comfortable quarters just on the bank of a big pond where thousands of lilies were in full blossom and the many merry songs which the many beautiful sights gave birth to, made life and company fully enjoyable and worth what not.

The children of Dame Nature were singing and dancing in raptures at the feet of Mother Nature ; the worshipers worshipped the Creator in the midst of the verdure of His creation.

In this pilgrimage what joy, what bliss, what love, what friendly feelings, what uplifting and purification of the souls, were obtained, no words could ever express. In fact, the pilgrims lived in the midst of and enjoyed all the blessings of Heaven, which were showered upon their heads in countless numbers. Glory unto Him, the Sublime and the Beatiful, the Infinite and the All-Merciful.

In the beginning of 1897, the Prayer meetings were held at 23, Bhowani Churn Dutt's Lane, the house occupied by Benoyendra Nath and his family.

In June 1897, Benoyendra Nath rented the top flat of No. 92, Harrison Road, Calcutta, and setting apart the spacious hall on the south-east corner of the said house for the Prayer Meeting, he started therein a Students' Boarding under the name and style of "Fraternal Home." He himself was its curator. His description of the 'Fraternal Home' may be gathered from the following letter written to a friend immediately after its inauguration.

92, Harrison Road.

July 7, 1897.

Dearest Brother,

I dreamt last night that all the friends were assembled in their new Prayer Meeting Hall, and it was the time for *Uphasana* which was going to be conducted by the man who had come back from the West after a long absence, and I cannot describe the sort of trembling sensation with which I awoke! Would that you were here to see this new Hall of ours, or that I could send you a picture thereof. Pratap Babu was here this morning, and even he confessed, that it was simply *splendid*!

Did you ever imagine when you passed by the house which held the "*Atmoddhar School*" that it had such capacities? A splendid hall for the Prayer Meeting, a nice room for the Secretary thereof (would that he were worthy of it!) besides four other rooms where we have already got eight boarders and expect to get five more in a day or two—and all in the third story just next to the heavens. While downstairs there is the Homeopathic School of Dr. P. C. Mozumdar

with the chance, now happily or unhappily rather remote, of having a hospital attached to it with four or five patients—so no lack of Homeopathic doctors should the boarders fall ill, nor lack of opportunity for the workers in our Charity Section to find a fair field for their labours. After all, we have only to be thankful for what has happened of late in connection with the *Mandir*!

Yours affectionately,

BENOY.

The late Mr. Narendra Nath Sen, M.A., B.L., the then Dewan of the Cooch Behar Estate became a member of the said Prayer Meeting. Besides Mr. Sen, the late Dr. Doorgadas Gupta, M.B., the late Honorable Nalin Behari Sircar, the late Babu Pulin Behari Sircar, the distinguished scholar Dr. Brojendranath Seal and many such other known men of Calcutta used to attend the Prayer Meetings. Most of the youngmen of the Navavidhan of those days were its members. In the month of May, 1898, when Plague first made its appearance in Calcutta many were compelled to take shelter under the roof of the said "Fraternal Home" and lived together for a few months. Thus their friendship got an opportunity to be ripened. Oh! How sweet are the recollections of those happy days! What an intense, holy impulse of Love existed between the inmates of the "Home". Love's kindly light was the guide then.

Leaving bed early with the crimson dawn, finishing the morning duties, all used to congregate in the hall of the Prayer Meeting for *Upasana*. In the meantime dear Heavenly Mother filled the room with effulgent rays of the morning sun and cooled the same with sweet, soft, refreshing morning breeze. The *Upasana* always commenced with the sweet, melodious hymns of Brother Kalinath and

was conducted by Benoyendranath. Spiritual might of Benoyendranath was very great at that time. That regular *U'pasana* gave all courage and strength to fight out the daily battle of life. After *U'pasana* was over, all dispersed and attended to their respective vocations. After the day's work was finished, in the afternoon, all again met together to hear Benoyendranath's readings. The readings were either from the works of Sophocles or from the works of Robert Browning or from the works of such other famous writers. In the evening all used to take their seats on the terrace of the said 92, Harrison Road and engaged in conversation on various topics—story-telling, discussions, singing, etc. went on endlessly. None wished to leave the company. At last rang the bells merrily for evening meal but not the hearts. All reluctantly got down. But in the dining-room all had to face another difficulty. No one liked to be served first and prove discourteous! Each and everyone was obstructing the cook. How the difficulty was to be got over then? However, somebody amongst us unfortunately had to take the lead and put an end to the *golmal*!

In June 1898, the following persons, amongst others, were the inmates of the said "Fraternal Home," the late Rev. Bhai Kalinath Ghosh, the late brother Mukti Nath Das, Sreejutt Jnanendra Mohun Sen, Dr. Satyendranath Sen, Mr. Rajendranath Sen, Mr. Prosantakumar Sen, Mr. Benode Behary Mozoomdar, Dr. Karunakumar Chatterjee, Dr. Banka Behary Chowdhury and Sjt. Debendra N. Bose. Some of the regular visitors were as follows:—the late brother Monmohan Chatterjee, the late brother Upendrakristo Gupta, the late brother Amritananda Roy, Mr. Pramatha Nath Chatterjee, Dr. Jagonmohan Das and the late lamented Professor Mohit Chandra Sen, who was a



Professor of Philosophy in the Hughli College then and used to attend the Prarthana Somaj on Saturdays regularly. The Prarthana Somaj in those days used to draw full house. Mohit Chandra also conducted *Upasanas*. His sweet, simple, child-like prayers always melted our hearts and brother Kalinath's enthusiastic, rapturous songs, such as, "অগ্নিমস্ত্রে দীক্ষা লয়ে, হব আজি অগ্নিময়" leavened our hearts with fire and with a lion's strength. Although Professor Benoyendranath's relation with his pupils was loving and happy yet he never tolerated the least moral laxity on their part. Smoking was strictly prohibited in the "Fraternal Home". The very first rule of the said Home was that if any of its boarders was found to be attending any of the Public Theatres of Calcutta he had to be removed therefrom immediately.

The first case of plague in the community was perhaps that of brother Monmohan Chatterjee. He was a student in the Calcutta Medical College and had the poison inoculated in him through a cut in his finger, whilst performing a post mortem examination on a plague case. He succumbed to it and his passing away is thus described by Benoyendranath in a letter of his to a friend:—

"I have never seen such a quiet passing away. When in the still light of the morning he looked at me with those deep full eyes of his and whispered "চললাম" in the gentlest tone possible, the word went with a thrill to my heart and who could have thought that the end was so near? It seemed as if the Ocean of Eternity was lying before us, so still and smooth, and this little bark was being launched so gently, so quietly. Not the least cloud or storm in the sky, but the gentlest breeze beating softly upon the sail, and the bark glided imperceptibly farther and farther and the pilgrim kept looking wistfully at us and we kept looking wistfully at him till with a slight

flutter it passed beyond the horizon and there came darkness upon our eyes and upon our hearts.

There was not the slightest sign of any disease on his face or any part of his body, only his cold, perspiring hands and legs were in our hands and we were rubbing them in desperate earnest as if any external warmth could supply the place of the warmth which the heart failed to give. From morning till two in the afternoon, we rubbed and watched and then the shortness of breath increased and the muscles of the face began to twitch, more in agony in the eyes, but when I said "Monmohan, Monmohon, close thine eyes, and think of the hymn which thou lovest to sing so much "আঁধারে লুকায়ে কেন, ডাকিছ মা মৃদুস্বরে" immediately there came intelligence to his eyes and though the agony was so great that it seemed to make the eye-balls start from their sockets, yet by dint of will he closed his eyes and the peace of calm intelligence and faith which overcomes the agony of the last passion was on his face. Then Prasanta sang "দয়াময় হরি, দয়াময় হরি জপরে মন রসনা" and also "আঁধারে লুকায়ে কেন" and as the last words of the hymn "কাছে এসে হাতে ধরে, লয়ে যাও গো কোলে করে, কোলে চড়ে মা মা বলে, ঘরের ছেলে যাই ঘরে" were vibrating in the air, the agony had ceased and the calm of the final peace had settled upon his face.

It was an illness only of four days. The first attack of fever came on the night of Wednesday (week) the 13th instant. Three days before that he had complained of a slight pain in the thumb and Dr. Bird of the Hospital had told him that it was due to an unconscious inoculation of septic poison which he might have received at a post mortem which he performed the previous day and even performed an operation on the thumb. But the matter was so slight Monmohon didn't seem to take any serious

notice of it and when he came to us Tuesday evening he was perfectly hale and hearty, only there was still a slight pain in the thumb. He went to College as usual on Wednesday, but the fever came on that night, though the wound of the operation on the thumb had perfectly healed up. It was a high fever, rising sometimes to  $106^{\circ}$ , and then on Saturday night there came profuse perspiration and weakening of the pulse, which with the early twilight of the dawn of Sunday (17th) the doctors felt to be a hopeless collapse. He lingered on till 2-15 p.m. in quiet expectation of death, with his intelligence perfectly clear, and though about an hour before his death we could not catch his words, though we saw the lips moving because the articulation became indistinct, yet to the last moment he quickly grasped the least words that we spoke and it was on the wings of the words which Prasanta sang that his spirit was borne away.

Cut down by some subtle poison unconsciously imbibed he passed away in the full vigour of health. There was not the least sign of anything morbid in his face even after the spirit had passed away. Day before yesterday, Protap Babu was telling me that when he came away after looking at the body he had been exercised the whole night with the thought that he was not really dead but there was still some power within the reach of man which could revive him.

My Brother, what more shall I write. Never before had I been called upon to watch by the side of a death-bed in which I was so personally concerned. From morning till the last moment with an interval of one hour at noon, he was almost in my arms and every now and then he looked so wistfully at me, and I could only pray, "If possible, O Father! if possible!" Mohit has written a heart-breaking note on receiving the intelligence,

as the fates would have it he didn't come that Saturday. Lalit Babu came only the next morning to find a vacant house. Those of us that were here were gathered round his bedside, and oh ! the thought, that henceforth his place will be vacant ! I know my Brother, it will break your heart, for here was the youth in whom you might have found your Hiranand come back !"

Thursday, April 21st, 1898.

A special Divine Service was held at the Fraternal Home to commemorate the sad departure of Brother Monomohan by the Members of the Prayer Meeting, Benovendra Nath conducting the *Upasana* and Bhai Kali Nath leading the hymns with *pathos*.

A few quotations are again made here to give an insight into Benoyendra Nath's mind, whilst staying at the "Fraternal Home" and they speak for themselves.

Sunday, August 14, 1898.

Only yesterday, at the Prayer Meeting the spirit of my *udbohana* was that the worshipper must feel even as he who has set out on his last long pilgrimage. At the time the picture of death in its calmness, its unruffled peace and total separation from all flesh and the world, came so vividly into my mind that it appeared to me as the fittest attitude in which to approach the presence of God. It is strange perhaps that such should be the spirit of my *udbodhana* to a worship which is semi-public in its character, but it is a fact that I cannot overcome this sense of loneliness even in the company of so many friends. It is out of this sense of loneliness that I wrote to Mohit in the evening, and this was also my predominant mood in the morning *upashana* to-day. Indeed it is still a problem to me whether there *can* really be such a thing as public or semi-public *upashana*.

And it was this morning, just after our *upashana*, that I was called to behold a death so calm and peaceful. With the snows of eightyfive winters on the head, with the flowers of eightyfive summers strewed around it, lay the body of the venerable sage from which the spirit had flown away. As often as I looked upon that face, I thought of the words that had come to me the previous evening, and I said to myself, if there was anywhere a picture of a *Yogin* sunk deep in *samadhi*, it was this !

It is a pity that I know so little about the life of the venerable Ramtanu Lahiri. I picked up a fact or two about his life from Basanta Babu (his son) on our way to the burning ghat; I remember a friend of mine used frequently to talk about him at Bhagalpur; and it was only once that I had a personal interview with him only for a few minutes. And yet there was that in him which would make its way into the heart of everybody that once heard of him, and so it made its way into my heart also, and I too feel that a presence has passed away, which, hidden as it was for the most part behind a screen from the public view, made the earth richer, sweeter and altogether more beautiful so long as it was upon it.

Born, if I have been rightly informed, in 1813, he had retired from public service several years before I was born; and as quietness and self-concealment were the predominant traits of his character, it is no wonder that his name has made so little sound during our life-time. The one thing about him that I saw with my own eyes in my two minutes' talk with him was his humility. "Oh you are so learned, I am not worthy even to talk with you!" This, or something like this he said to me, and he used to say the same thing to everybody that came to see him. When I reflect how *genuine* it all was, and try to understand how this could be *possible*, it seems

to me that there are some men to whom Nature has given the birthright of perpetual childhood, who never travel "inland" but are always "in sight of that immortal sea which brought us hither," who do not simply *see* but *ever are*

"Children sporting upon the shore,  
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore!"

Living perpetually in the midst of the roar of the mighty waters, he had the privilege of silence. He was not the man to cut a figure in public meetings, and so far as I understand he has not left anything in writing besides his private diary which perhaps is not intended ever to see the light. He would not take any part in public worships, and I wonder if anybody ever had the privilege of listening to his private prayers. In the case of any other man I would put this down as unnatural reserve or an affected shyness, or an overdrawn diffidence arising out of a defect of faith and impulse. But in his case I feel his silence has depths which he that passes it by so lightly will altogether miss. Did not Carlyle write: it would have been better for David if he had not composed any psalms? The sage that has just passed away did not compose any psalms, and I for one at the present moment feel drawn towards him the more for this. If he cherished any aspirations, his lips did not blab of them; if he had any tears to shed, they were not for the public eye; if he loved his God, he did it in the depths of his soul and no touch of a foreign world was ever allowed to desecrate its sanctity. What a height for the soul to stand on from which it looks severely upon the struggles and sorrows of poor, weak mortals,—with love, with pity, with brotherly thought and care, but never thinks of mingling its own shrieks with the

universal tumult below. Others may *spe*ak of silence, not remembering that they break it and drive it away even by the very act, but his was the lofty privilege of *being* silent in real earnest. And yet his life is so vocal, was all throughout so vocal with the softest, beautifullest music—it is the music of the waters playing about all round, heightened and sweetened and made articulate by the clear, silvery laughter ringing out of the heart-chords of the child sporting upon the shore!

I have since read the notice of his life published by the *Sanjibani* of the 5th *Bhadra*. Only a few facts make up all that has to be recorded about this life. The date of birth, 1813, is confirmed. Was not initiated into the mysteries of reading and writing till his twelfth year, when under the kind patronage of Mr. Hare he was admitted as a free student to his school, then called the "Society's School." Entered the Hindu College in his seventeenth year and passed its final examination in 1834. In the same year was appointed a teacher in the Hindu College where he remained for ten years. Was transferred to Krishnagar in 1845. After serving in Burdwan, Baraset, Utterpara, Rasapugla and Barisal he was brought back to Krishnagar in 1860, and retired on pension in 1865.

The few incidents given illustrate certain marked traits of his character, and his strong individuality in the midst of so much gentleness and humility. It was in 1830, the year in which Raja Ram Mohan Roy founded the Brahmo Somaj, when he was in his seventeenth year that he refused to take part in an idolatrous celebration (*Nandotsav*) in his house, and was taken severely to task for being a suspected follower of the Raja. He threw off his sacred thread, in 1851, on his way to Gazipur in a boat, on being taunted by some companion about

the hypocrisy of eating in a boat of Mahammadans and yet keeping the sacred thread on. Would not shake hands with Sir Rivers Thompson for his attitude towards the natives at the time of the Ilbert Bill agitation. With respect to the Grimley incident, it is characteristic that it should be remembered by the *Sahib* while it had passed out of the mind of the gentle Hindu. He was thrice married, and had eleven children, of whom only three are now living. Perhaps the most characteristic anecdote is that about the death of his eldest son. A conversational meeting was to be held in his house on the day when this event happened. When the friends came he quietly said, "As my son is lying dead in this room, let us go outside and have our meeting under the tree there!" His composure and self-possession on the occasion of the numerous other afflictions through which he had to pass were equally remarkable.

His life was a witness to the power of gentleness and love alone to conquer the hearts of men. He had sternness enough, but it was silent like that of the rock. In his dealings with men,—with his children, his pupils, his domestic servants, he was never heard to speak one harsh word, much less found to do one unkind act. And yet his presence served to restrain as well as to melt, and he was a living example which gives the lie to the opinion, universally current, that there can be no discipline without harshness. It is so difficult to believe in the power of love alone, unless one sees it actually illustrated before his eyes ; and we should have welcomed them with great thankfulness if more specific examples had been given of cases in which his gentleness and love triumphed over the obduracy and perversity of men, and restrained and chastened bad impulses and habits where everything else had failed.



Friday, March 10, 1899.

The whole of the morning passed away in doing the business of the B. S. Committee. Breakfasted at home with Beni Babu. Went in the afternoon to the Institute meeting to give a reception to the mofussil Entrance candidates. The phonograph reproductions,—including a speech by Gladstone, not distinctly audible; tiresome experiments by Professor Mukerjee; Dr. Bose's *veni, vidi, vici*, storming the whole fortress by one gun-fire,—what a nicety in his method!—Excellent address by Mr. A. H. L. Fraser (Home Secretary to the Government of India) from the chair; drawling speech by Justice Bannerjee; concluding remarks by Mr. K. C. Bannerjee. How funny the two poems composed by H. P. Sastri, which he was so anxious to have sung, and which he made two boys to read out from the platform! One of these contains the following couplet:—

“আমাদের দেখ দিতে হে উৎসাহ, নিজ মস্তিষ্কবরে পাঠায়েছে সাহ”

Which is translated thus:—You see the Viceroy has sent one of his Secretaries to encourage us! The whole thing is in the same strain!

But what a loss would it have been to me if I had missed Mr. Fraser's address this evening. Never have I listened to a similar address from a high official of his position, or for the matter of that, from any Government official. It seems to me to be a striking departure from what we have been hitherto accustomed to from the official world. On the other hand, in its breadth of view and freedom of tone it is an equally striking contrast to what we are accustomed to from the missionary circle. Here a missionary official has been discovered at last—so strange, so unexpected, I doubt if the like of him will be met with in any other person.

He said how, though a comparatively old man, he had not much difficulty in entering into the heart of those to welcome whom the meeting had been called, for he remembered his own experiences when, a child of fifteen, he left his rural home and entered the University of Edinburgh as an under-graduate. He spoke of the contrast between a city and a country life, and yet how the latter possesses certain advantages that the former is wanting in, and how the pride of living in a town also may breed a narrowness which limits our vision. Then he went on to speak of the temptations of a city life, and scarcely any words could be better chosen to impress upon the boys the lesson of purity. A step further, and he spoke of the "unsettling of old beliefs and notion" which every student, as he advanced in his career, had the chance of passing through, and yet doubt was not a bad thing, but it would be bad indeed to rest in doubt; for doubts were like earthquakes which, while they did a deal of good by breaking down things that were worthless, would yet be disastrous if they were to be the permanent order of nature. Then he quoted from "In Memoriam":—

"He fought his doubts and gathered strength,

He would not make his judgment blind,

Etc.

Etc.

Etc."

He preached also the superiority of silent work over vain speech, and of honest performance over vapid babbling—characteristic of man—his perpendicularity. The fable of the hen and the ostrich. Where the soul within was good, it was a good thing if it found expression in words; but where the soul was bad, it only deepened its guilt if words were made use of to conceal its badness,

"For words, like Nature, half reveal

And half conceal the soul within."

He concluded by referring to the impression he had while listening to Carlyle in his own University, and he asked the boys to remember always the prayer which Carlyle taught in his address and which it was possible for everyone, whether in doubt or in light, to make his own: "Lord make us loyal!"

Saturday, March 11, 1899.

M—conducted service at the Prayer Meeting. Throughout the service and the sermon his voice seemed to carry an impression of weakness which showed that he has not yet recovered his natural health.

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In the course of the deliberations this afternoon it was proposed to have a Committee and two Assistant Secretaries for the Prayer Meeting, and also as there had been difficulties sometimes with regard to the conduct of the service and the singing of hymns in the absence of one or two persons, it was proposed to take in a few others who would be especially responsible for these things. There was a good deal of talk principally between M. and Kali Babu about our relations with our elders. Have ideas been cleared up, and difficulties removed? I am afraid we are still far from that.

Saturday, March 18, 1899.

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M— conducted service. His sermon was on [ভাষা] His voice is still weak, and Kali Babu complained that certain portions of the service were inaudible to him.

The proposals made last Sunday were somewhat put into shape. Deben Babu and Banku have been made Assistant Secretaries. The following have been put on

the Committee: Mohit, Opin Babu, Jnan Babu, Prasanta, Rajen, Dhiren, the Secretary and the two Assistant Secretaries. Kali Babu's name was proposed but he declined. The charge of singing hymns was given to Kali Babu, Prasanta, Ami, Panchanan Babu, Hari Babu, Lalit Babu and Bidhu. The following were made responsible for the service: Mohit, Prasanta, Ami, Kali Babu, N—, Nagendra Babu, Beni Babu and the Secretary.

Kali Babu raised a question about the order of service, but all the other members expressing their willingness to make it a matter of trust, the question was dropped for the present.

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Thomas Henry Huxley.

(Leslie Stephen—in the Nineteenth Century, Dec. 1900).

In that year (1860) took place the famous encounter at Oxford between Huxley and Samuel Wilberforce. It was one incident in a remarkable outburst of intellectual activity. The old controversy between scientific and ecclesiastical champions was passing into a new phase. Darwin's teaching had not only provided a fresh method, but suggested applications of scientific principles which widened and deepened the significance of the warfare. A "new reformation," as Huxley afterwards called it was beginning, and the intellectual issues to be decided were certainly not less important than those which had presented themselves to Erasmus and Luther. In the struggle which followed Huxley took a leading part. He made original researches; he was the clearest expositor of the new doctrine to the exoteric world, he helped to organise the scientific teaching which might provide competent disciples or critics; and he showed most clearly and vigorously the

bearing of his principles upon the most important topics of human thought.

Many could admire "Darwin's bulldog," as he called himself, even if they felt some sympathy with the bull whom he pinned.

"Science and Literature," said Huxley, "are not two things, but two sides of one thing."

"Exposition," he observes, "is not Darwin's *forte*. But there is a marvellous dumb sagacity about him like that of a sort of miraculous dog, and he gets to the truth by ways as dark as those of the Heathen Chinese." The final cause of Huxley might seem—though the theory is a little out of place—to have been the provision of an articulate utterance for Darwin's implicit logic.

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In 1899, Brother Promotho Lall returned from England and was most cordially received by the Members of the Prayer Meeting at the Fraternal Home. It was about this time that Mr. Gopal Singh Choulha, M.A. came down from Lahore to be initiated into the faith of the New Dispensation to Calcutta. He was accommodated in the Fraternal Home and all the arrangements for the function was organized by the Members of the Prayer Meeting. It was a very imposing ceremony right through, Bhai Promotho Lall conducted the service and Benoyendra Nath interrogated him and the Rev. Bhai Protap Chunder Mozooindar delivered the sermon at the end, all in English. Every Sunday morning, regular classes were held at the Fraternal Home for imparting moral training to boys, Brothers Promotho Lall, Benoyendra Nath, Prasanta Kumar and others being in charge. Anniversary Meetings were also organized and celebrated with great *eclat* for distributing prizes to the meritorious boys, where Sir

Rabindra Nath, Sir P. C. Roy and other illustrious persons presided.

The late Rev. Kali Churn Banerjee delivered some lectures criticising the faith and the principles of the Brahmo Samaj rather adversely. It was Benoyendra Nath who addressed the public at the Albert Hall in a series of 3 or 4 lectures, in reply to those criticisms. In these replies, Benoyendra Nath's erudition, his mastery over the philosophies of the Brahmo religion and their most rational exposition, his wonderful power of rebutting the adverse criticisms and over all his serene, unbiassed attitude whilst discussing, struck one and all with profound admiration. Even his opponent Mr. Banerjee could not help acknowledging his courtesy, his vast learning and his inimitable humility. Seldom did Benoyendra Nath express himself so best as on this occasion and it is a matter of great regret that the speeches, which were extempore, have not been written out and preserved for publication.

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## CHAPTER VI. MARRIAGE AND AFTER.

In 1899, whilst still in the Fraternal Home, Benoyendra Nath consented to marry Sreemati Sakuntala Devi, the youngest daughter of the Rev. Bhai Prasanna Kumar Sen. All the missionaries of the Church and the whole community were highly gratified at this happy incidence and offered their hearty felicitations and blessings upon the two souls which were soon going to be united in nuptial wedlock. As soon as the marriage proposal was settled Benoyendra Nath went back to his family residence at 41, Machuabazar Street, which was a new house just rented for better accommodation of the family.

DARJEELING,

*June 14th, '99.*

Rev. Bhai Protap Chander Mozoomdar thus writes to Benoyendranath about his marriage :—

MY DEAR BENOYENDRA,

A curious sensation of happiness and tenderness overspreads my whole soul to read your letter. Every life that is worth living, is made up of crises, and Providence saves us again and again from the death of dullness and uniformity. There is such a thing as the crisis of joy, which like strong sunshine, penetrates whatever it touches, and kindles a whole landscape. Such indeed is your present state. Your poor old father, your patient mother, your good brothers and sisters, all must feel the light and warmth they have been waiting for. Your worthy excellent friends, the elders of community whom you love and respect all must bless you and congratulate you ; even I in my loneliness and exile must join the happy throng, and pray to God our Father that everything may be for the best and happiest.

Life is such a mysterious and marvellous reality that there are prospects and perspectives in it which, wise as you are, have not yet opened to you, and now that you are about to take the great step, I venture to hope that the heavens may open to you and the earth unlock more than one great secret. Our dear daughter Rajlakshmi, with whose training and teaching I had once to do much, has been for long years so hard pressed by misfortune and care, will for another little while—why not for long while?—taste of the cup of blessed happiness she has not known for ever so long, and our Prasanta will find an elder brother, and Sakuntala, young, tender, little thing, will discover a

solution to more than one problem of her life. All this is very good, and gives me a quite complete satisfaction.

.....My son, you and others like you, associate yourselves with me in glorying God and serving Man, yea Woman also, be of one heart and one mind and let us, old and young, unite in a secret covenant before the Throne that we shall live and die for One Cause only.

May every blessing abide with you and every temptation be removed, and may the crisis lead to the consummation.

Most lovingly yours,

P. C. MOZOOMDAR.

In the month of July, the marriage was celebrated with great *eclat*, Rev. Bhai Protap Chunder Mozoomdar conducted the divine service and Rev. Bhai Gour Govinda Roy, Upadhyah, performed the ceremonial functions. Thus the two oldest families of the Nababidhan (the family of an old apostle and the family of an old devout layman) were united in closer and firmer ties of loving and sacred relation.

It was the great will of the Divine Providence which thus diverted Benoyendra Nath's life from the channel of celibacy at the age of thirty into one of married life and the whole Church looked upon this happy union as a great sign prognostic of many happy developments in the community so badly in need of guide and leadings in matters of family life. It was considered by many to be a new departure of life in the case of Benoyendra Nath, but a more critical and reasonable study of his works and activities before and after marriage will make all understand the situation and see that the conduct was a natural and continuous progress of a life beckoned by Divine Light so



brilliantly illuminating right through, leaving no shade or shadow of doubt or vacillation in any part of the onward march of the hero. Struggling, striding, marching onwards, never faltering back in the bivouac of life, the pilgrim progressed, the Heavenly Star showing the path always and the noble soul leaving foot prints on the sands of time to be deciphered and followed by many coming afterwards. In fact many followed him soon in taking to this new departure, *i.e.*, married life.

In 1902, Benoyendra Nath and Rev. Bhai Brojo Gopal Neogy visited the famous caves in central India, Ajanta and Ellora. He was much struck with the grandeur and magnitude of these caves, the relics of Buddhist architecture. In 1903, his works and activities were many and multifarious, distributing charities, visiting and feeding the inmates of hospitals, organizing and himself delivering lectures in connection with various institutions, endeavouring to bring union in the scattered community. In this year, his second brother Dr. Satyendra Nath Sen was married to the second daughter of Mr. Matilal Gupta, Benoyendra Nath and Promotho Lall first saw and selected the bride, Satyendra Nath approved later ; Benoyendra Nath was very enthusiastic in this pleasant festivity in the family.

About this time he visited the beautiful village of *Amragori*, the native place of our beloved missionary Bhai Fakir Chandra Roy. Here he saw and enjoyed the pleasant rustic life of the villagers there. He inspected the school, addressed the boys there and gave good advice and instructions for the betterment of the institution.

He also went over to Mayurbhanj at the kind invitation of the Maharaja Sree Ram Chandra Bhanj Deo who was one of his beloved and intimate friends. He stayed there for about a week and the time was spent in sweet

company and pleasant long talk with the Maharaja about various spiritual matters, particularly faith and sacrifice and on religious, economic and social reforms. Brother Amritananda and Bhai Nandalal accompanied him in this trip.

He delivered two lectures in the Jubilee Hall at Mayurbhanj on "Santifying Love" and ভগবদ্ভক্তি ও কর্মযোগ।

In the month of August, the other members of his family went to Cuttack and Puri with his younger brother Dr. Satyendra Nath Sen, where their brother-in-law Beni Babu was residing. He could not join the party later, which he had intended to do, as he had to accompany his friend Babu Barada Prasad Ghosh who went to Bhagalpur to recover his health.

In the year 1904, Rev. Bhai Pratap Chandra Mozoomdar fell seriously ill and Benoyendra Nath had to accompany him to various places, such as Kurseong, Bankipore, Dehra Dun, Simultala, etc., wherever he went to recover his health. But alas! the changes did him no good and Mr. Mozoomdar had to be brought back in shattered health and his days became numbered. In the last days of his illness, in Peace Cottage at Calcutta, Mr. Mozoomdar was attended by the youngmen of the Church headed by Benoyendra Nath.

Nursed and so lovingly cared for by the devoted life-companion (Mrs. Mozoomdar) and the young beloved ones, doctored by the eminent physicians of the town, Mr. Mozoomdar's illness was fought strenuously but without any avail, and the end drew nearer and nearer. Benoyendra Nath succeeded in making them (Mr. and Mrs. Mozoomdar) not to feel the want of a loving son begotten of themselves, and the youngmen considered themselves blessed in the performance of this noble duty towards their great master. The following notes about Rev. Mr.

Mozoomdar, written by Benoyendra Nath, though incomplete, will be found worth reading.

"The veil which a long protracted illness had only half lifted seems to have been shaken off at last by the hand of death, and Protap Chunder Mozoomdar stands revealed to his countrymen as he was in his inmost spirit—by nature, and by the irrepressible hankering of his soul, essentially and for ever their own. The most beautiful thing in his ministry, at the weekly congregational worship when he was in Calcutta, was the prayer invoking God's blessing upon all humanity, in which he loved to repeat that his congregation was not confined within the four walls of the room, and the brotherhood that he belonged to extended all over the country, yea, beyond it, and embraced brothers and sisters "across the sea." If any idiosyncracies in temperament, habit, or opinion made him, now and then, a stumbling block and a rock of offence to this man or that man, to this party or that party, no repetition of them shall any further be recorded, and the world-wide brotherhood of the cultured, the devout, the pure-minded ; the *Yogees*, the zealous and consecrated servants of God shall henceforth claim him as one of their elect.

A life and spirit certainly not easy to understand, as certainly deserving of being studied. A child of the Brahmo Somaj, a missionary, an apostle, with gifts and powers denied by none, having, at the time of his death, no congregation which he might call specially his own. A reformer, undoubtedly, in many things, but a stumbling block to certain sections of advanced reformers in the country. A man devoted to public life, with rich powers of expression and oratorical gifts, destined absolutely to fail as a leader of men. A heart without guile, as that of a child, and with the tenderness of a woman, with ready powers of sympathy, and a clear insight into the spiritual

needs and difficulties of near friends and associates, ending with a lifelong wail that it could not make another its own. A spirit drawn irresistibly towards Christ, but having scarcely any dogmatic explanations to offer, producing satisfaction neither in the minds of his own countrymen nor of Christian missionaries. A puzzling type of character,—but genuine and true. Witness a life of three score and five, and a death-process carried through nearly a whole year. Amongst a people that would make of each of its noble-hearted sons a stepping stone for ascending into the future, such a character would certainly not be thrown away.

In the tangle of the years through which he lived, the threads of his life history also it would not be easy to trace out. His early reminiscences are given in his own picturesque style in the short autobiographical sketch given as an introduction to the "Heart-Beats." For the period since he joined the Brahmo Somaj to the death of Keshub Chunder Sen in 1884, all minor streams merge into the great Stream of the Dispensation whereof he himself was in part a historian, but whose full history has yet to be recorded. Incidents in personal dealings and relationships there must have been of an interesting character, and will; of course, fall within the scope of the biographer. We may here specially mention his mission tour to Bombay, and long residence there, the influence whereof remains to this day, and is borne witness to by men like the Hon. Justice Chandravarkar and Dr. Bhandarkar, Mr. Malabari and the Hon. Mr. Gokhale.

The enquiry comes from several friends: when are you going to bring out a biography of Pratap Chunder Mozoomdar? May we not answer by another question: Why ask for a biography at all? Pratap Chunder Mozoomdar belongs to the type of men who do not wait

for the pen of the biographer to introduce them to their fellow beings. He would be repelled by the thought of giving any sittings to a portrait-painter to produce an idealized picture. He would rather have himself photographed,—and there you have those features just as they were, and you are welcome to think of them just as you please. His affinity was more with the world of thought than with the world of action. And in every line that he has given to the world, just as in every line of that noble, open, majestic face, bearing a faithful print of all those struggles and sufferings he had gone through, just softened by a touch of melancholy, you can read all that is worth knowing about that soul,—that was merciless to its own sins and shortcomings just as it had no patience with the foolishnesses and iniquities that were tearing up his own community.

Fratap Chunder Mozoomdar was best appreciated in America. The best and the only biography, or sketch of a biography that we have of him, and are likely to have, I think, for many a day to come, is written by an American friend. His books containing his deepest and maturest thoughts were all published in America, and read there by a much larger number of people, and with much better appreciation than in his own country, or in his own Somaj. A place of unique honour was given to him in the Chicago Parliament of Religions, and his message was listened to, at Chicago and elsewhere, with an interest and enthusiasm that made its impression permanent. During the last years, his work and life were supported by the Mozoomdar Mission Fund raised and maintained by his American friends. During his last illness, the longing of his soul was for those friends beyond the seas! "Put me on board one of those ships once more," he used to say, "and I shall be all right again!"

Now, when one reflects upon his life after five years since he passed away, all this seems so natural. He was put down, we are told, in a certain classification and allotment of functions to the missionaries of the New Dispensation made by Minister Keshub Chunder Sen, as the "Representative of the Western Ideal." In one word, perhaps, that Ideal stands for Conscience combined with Culture. It means a certain rigour of discipline, an impatience with laxity in conversation and living, an eagerness to protest against evil under any form, a rigid self-examination and a striving after the purity and a high standard of public life, a general progressiveness of temperament, all which are rather foreign to the atmosphere in which the majority of people in his own community lived moved and had their being. Both in spirit and in form it is wide apart from oriental asceticism. It is not the nakedness of the *Sannyashin* nor the fasting of the mendicant,—but the rigorous discipline and self-abnegation of the scholar, of the worker, of the soldier—a self-abnegation that is only a preparation for the fuller activities of life. The Western ideal recognises no virtue in mere negation. How much work have you done, it asks, not how many fasts have you kept? How many good deeds have you promoted, how many of the blind, and the crippled and the helpless poor have you helped with the earnings and savings of your honest labour,—not how much you have earned to feed your own laziness by begging from others! The Western ideal appreciates the rectitude and sanctity of the public life and all public services. It realizes the conditions under which alone a congregation and congregational worship are possible. Just as in politics and in the public services it has led to a progressive emancipation from all forms of corruption, so

in religion and in the church life it has been steadily eliminating from society the low artifices of priestcraft."

His memorial sermon at the Bharatvarshiya Brahma Mandir on Pratap Chunder Mozoomdar has been published in his Lectures and Essays Vol. III by the Nababidhan Trust. Pratap Chunder, during his last days, used to remark and in fact once wrote to Benoyendra Nath that he was getting old and infirm and the lighted torch of the New Dispensation was falling off from his feeble hand, he knew one strong and powerful who could easily carry the same to enlighten the cultured people across the sea, but why was he not stepping forward. Such was the wish, the earnest desire of the faithful Interpreter when he found that his mortal days were getting numbered.

Perhaps it was so ordained by the Providence too. It was in 1905 that at Geneva in Switzerland at an "International Conference of Unitarian and other Liberal Religious Thinkers and Workers" where all the theists of the world were invited to attend, and Benoyendra Nath was one of them and went over as representing the Brahmo Somaj in India. He was a pilgrim, as he styled himself, making pilgrimage to the various lands of the western world to gather, as well as to distribute knowledge and experiences, theological and spiritual, the results whereof he tried to embody in the pamphlet called *The Pilgrim* published by him whilst in America but most unfortunately the publication was not completed.

On the eve of his departure, farewell meetings were organized at several places by people to whom he was so very dear and whom he loved so much. At the Presidency College, Calcutta, the Professors and the pupils met to bid him adieu and here he addressed them on 'Socrates' the great master who taught his pupils "to know thyself."







—no real thing—

An address was given to Benoyendra Nath and a photo of the assembly was taken.

### FAREWELL ADDRESS.

TO

BABU BENOYENDRA NATH SEN, M.A.,

Professor, Presidency College,

Calcutta.

SIR,

We, the students of this College, beg to approach you on the eve of your long absence from our midst with this humble tribute of our sincerest affection and heartfelt gratitude.

Yours, Sir, were the first endeavours to kindle in us that brilliant spark of enthusiasm which led to the organisation of our much valued Debating Club. It is your noble presence and kind co-operation which have turned our wandering energies into the beneficent channel of moral, social and literary improvement which has of late quite changed the student life of this College—a change which is manifested in the rise of other cognate institutions which would hardly have come into existence but for the originating impulse from you.

It is you, Sir, who first countenanced the process of communication between the teachers and the taught outside the narrow limits of the lecture-room. Your genial kindness to your students and social relations with them have built for you an enduring throne of affections in their heart of hearts. You no longer appear to us the distant professor of the lecture-room, all robed in tutorial isolation, but a benevolent deity in whom we behold our personal guide, philosopher, and friend, and to whom we

can apply for solace and advice in cases of trouble and difficulty.

It becomes us not to give expression to the high success that has been yours in your own line of a professor ; but, with extreme confidence in your splendid abilities, should we invoke the Almighty to grant you in your projected journey, a harvest of success still more abundant. And, while you travel over new scenes in distant lands, we pray you to remember that you leave behind you in the land of your birth a band of devoted admirers, who with parting tears of grief at the thought of this temporary separation from you, all look forward to the joyous time when they will hail you back crowned with additional glory.

We have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient pupils,

THE STUDENTS OF THE PRESIDENCY COLLEGE.

PRESIDENCY COLLEGE,

*Dated, the 31st July, 1905.*

At the Youngmen's Prayer Meeting, at the Fraternal Home, at the Mission House, at the Bharatbarshiya Brahma Mandir, at the Albert Hall, at a meeting of the boys of the Sunday School, at private residences of his friends and relations, all met to send off their dear and near one, their beloved and respected one, to distant lands with the banner of the New Dispensation to carry message, so great and hopeful, which Keshub Chandra Sen delivered as "India's Message to Europe" and which Protap Chander interpreted so lucidly to the west after the Minister. A

second group-photo was also taken by the boys of the Sunday School who also presented him with a farewell address.

On the 1st August, 1905, a divine service was held at the family residence, where a few of his friends were also invited to attend, Benoyendra Nath himself conducting the service and the old father offered prayers mournfully but full of hopes, good wishes and blessings and entrusted his most beloved son to the care and mercy of the all-loving Mother of the Nababidhan. At the railway station, the partings were tearful but cheered at the bright future in view. His experiences in Europe and America are well narrated in the *Pilgrim*, a journal published and printed in London by the Christian Life Office. The first of the series only appeared and alas the rest did not. We make this the subject matter of the next chapter *in toto*.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### THE PILGRIM.

#### The Pilgrim's Message.

To all those dearly-beloved friends at home who wished me Godspeed when I stood ready to undertake this distant pilgrimage, I dedicate this simple record of the experiences and work I have, so far, gone through, with cordial loving greetings. They were not men belonging to any one particular denomination, or party, or part of the country. There were amongst them leaders of orthodox Hindu society, and of the native Christian community—men in Bombay and the Punjab, and the North-West, as well as in Calcutta; my respected colleagues (Indian and

European), and my beloved pupils in college, as well as representative members of all the sections of the Brahmo Somaj—the body that I belong to—and all those, young and old, with whom I have worshipped God together in the Church of the New Dispensation. Unto all these, in the course of my travels, in moments of great uplifting and enthusiasm, as well as when I have felt most lonely and depressed, hath my soul turned often and often ; and may it be my privilege, whether I be at home or abroad, to pray for, labour for, and serve each and all of these, so long as life lasts !

Will the East and the West ever understand each other ? Will England, and Europe, and America ever understand India ? Never, except on the sanctified heights of thought and life and character. Not without much cost must the ascent to those heights be made by each ; nay, not without much conflict even, and collision. Long, and hard, and strenuous must be the struggle before India—*i.e.*, her *millions*, her *people*—can realise what her soul is. Then alone will she know what to live for and what to die for. In this process others can and will help her as much by positive assistance as by positive, deep, and radical contradiction. Let her be thankful to the West, so far, at least, for giving her the idea of a common *soul* and a common *destiny* for the *millions*, the *people*. Will not the West help her still further to carry out this idea ? Is it not a law of the expansion of its own inner life that the West should say to the East : Live and know thyself, and glorify God with me ; as it is the mission of the East to say to the West : Live in order that thou mayest love God and find peace ? Verily, verily, it is true of both of them that they can neither live nor fulfil the law of their being till they have learnt to pray together : Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done !

*August 1st—December 1st, 1905.*

I. GENEVA.

**The Pilgrim's Journal.\***

*August 30th—September 1st.*

I left Calcutta on the night of August 1st, and sailed from Bombay in the Austrian Lloyds s.s. Nippon, on Saturday the 5th, after speaking at the Bombay Prarthana Somaj on the evening of the 4th, at a crowded meeting over which the Hon. Mr. Justice Chandravarkar presided. My immediate mission was to carry greetings from the Himalayas to the Alps, and deliver them at the third session of the "International Conference of Unitarian and other Liberal Religious Thinkers and Workers," which held its meetings in Geneva from the 28th to the 31st August, and to which I was appointed a delegate by the Brahmo Somaj Committee of Calcutta. The Nippon was a very slow boat, and I arrived in Geneva on the 30th August, *i.e.*, the third day of the Conference; after being in Venice for a few hours, just enough to give me an opportunity to make a trip over the canals and stand in the piazza in front of St. Mark's and the Ducal palace, besides having a sight of some of the pretty gondolas (alas, my own trip was made *not* in a gondola, but in one of those quite late-born prosaic steam ferries which they are constantly plying for the benefit of tourists), all helping to make the dream of that once enchanted "Queen of the Adriatic," henceforth for ever a reality to me. Though late come, my reception at the Conference was very warm and cordial, and though

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\* A journal of my public or semi-public engagements only in the course of my tour through Europe and America. All references to my relations with the many kind friends whom I met, and the beautiful homes whose hospitality I enjoyed are, as a matter of course, left out.

I had been put down on the programme for the session on the 29th, room was made for me in the afternoon session on the 31st, to read my paper on "The Problem of Religion in Modern India," and Professor Montet, of Geneva, the President of the Conference, was very warm in his references to India both in his opening presidential address, as well as in his speech at the banquet on the evening of the 31st, which brought the Conference to a close.

THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE.—It is remarkable to contemplate how the International Conference would lose, perhaps, more than half its interest and significance if only the East were to be excluded from its programme. The actual delegates from the East were very few indeed, and the part they had in the programme was comparatively inconsiderable, and yet I say this deliberately. Liberal religion, when confined to the few countries of Europe alone, has undoubtedly some very interesting questions falling within its purview. The question of the interpretation of the Bible, of the reading of (Christian) Church history, of the relation between the Church and the State, as well as of the application of religious ideas to the pressing social and political problems of the day, must be of absorbing interest to every European nation at the present moment ; and any conference that brings together the most advanced thinkers of Germany, and France, and England, and Holland, and Switzerland, and other parts of Europe, not to speak of America as well, to compare notes on these questions, and also to make important declarations, showing the most advanced positions so far attained, and also where the great consensus of the future is likely to be, must command the respect and attention of the whole Western world. But this is far from touching the problem of the world's religion of the future. That problem in its theological, philosophical and spiritual, as well as, in a

very deep and important sense, in its practical bearing, means the understanding of the East by the West, and of the West by the East. The "sacred books of the East" give you a touch only—a touch full of meaning and significance, no doubt, but still a touch only—with the East, and that, for the most part, with a spirit breathed only from the distant past. The *living men* of the East, and the *living men* of the West, have still to meet and recognise each other as *sacred*. The books of the East were anything but "sacred" in the eyes of the old dogmatic theology of the West, and the men of the East, too, may put on quite a new appearance in the light of loving truth that is waiting for the call of the spirit of liberal religion to be thrown upon them.

Then, again, liberal religion in the West cannot forget or lay aside the Cross, just as liberal religion in the East cannot forget the In-dwelling Spirit—the *Paramâtman*. Woe unto the East when the last man should have died therein to whom life in the Spirit is not a dream—but God is verily the breath of his soul—it will then have become an empty husk, an uprooted tree fit only to be cast into the fire. Liberal religion in the West, too, is nothing but an upholstered skeleton if it is without the breath, and the motion, and the *aroma* that comes out of the garden of Gethsemane. The old-world Christian martyr had the fascinating breath of this *aroma* about him, though his narrowness prevented his getting possession of the East. In the Roman and the mediæval world of Europe the Spirit of the Cross stood as the reconciler and solvent between sturdy force on one side and the deeper aspirations and softnesses and graces of life on the other, saving the one from sinking into barbarism, and uplifting the other from dreaminess and indolence. In the modern world, likewise, as between the East and the West—nay, for the matter of



that, in every part thereof—do we not require the same Spirit of the Cross to stand once more as the reconciler and solvent between the sturdy force of individualism and naturalism—in politics, in industry, in commerce, in everything—on the one hand, and the deeper aspirations, and softnesses, and graces of life on the other?

*September 25th—September 28th.*

## II. ATLANTIC CITY, U.S.A.

I had very little time to spare on the beauties of Switzerland, as I had been invited by President Southworth, of the Meadville Theological School, America, to be present at the National Conference of the American Unitarians, which was to have its sittings in Atlantic City from September 25th to September 28th, and also to accompany him thence to Meadville, in time for the opening of the session of the Theological School, which it was one of my special objects to visit in going to America.

The railway journey from Lucerne to Geneva, however, which was accomplished in the morning, gave me some glimpses into those beauties. Pretty, picturesque, smooth, artistic—these are the words that came to my lips as I looked upon the undulating hills and smooth green slopes, with interminable forests of pines and spruces all so evenly arranged, and the clear winding streamlets gurgling through the pebbles—all so beautifully in contrast with the wild grandeur of the Himalayas. But with all thy wildness, O Himalaya, thou art still to me the Incomparable, for, in all my travels through the world, where else have I come upon lands that speak so ceaselessly of a past that lived in communion with the Spirit of the Eternal that dwells in the mountains?

I hurried away from Geneva the next day after the Conference was over, and spent two days in Paris on my

way to London. Beautiful city of enchantment, that made every other city of the West look so dull and insipid in comparison! One of my days was given to the Louvre, and the other to the Versailles palaces and gardens; the latter happened to be a festival Sunday, so that all Versailles was in gala dress, with the fountains and the concerts playing, and about a hundred thousand or more of the gay Parisians out on holiday-making.

After a short stay in London of about ten days, I sailed for New York from Liverpool in the White Star line s.s. Celtic on the 15th September.

On board the Celtic they got up a meeting one evening, and wanted me to speak about India. It was a theme I loved. I spoke about the natural scenery, the art, the architectural remains, the religion of India. There were about a hundred and fifty ladies and gentlemen present in the dining saloon, who were all very warm and enthusiastic at what they heard.

After landing in New York, I hastened to Atlantic City to be present at the Conference. I was rather an unexpected guest. Yet, just at the opening of the regular proceedings, a very kind and cordial welcome was given to "the representative of the Brahmo Somaj" in a short address by Mr. Batchelor, President of the Council (Editor, *Christian Register*), and he was called upon to speak a word of greeting in response. This I did, holding up the mission of Unitarianism and of the Brahmo Somaj alike to be to forget all narrowness and sectarianism and lift on high the ideal faith of the future—my words being afterwards reported in the *Christian Register*.

THE ATLANTIC CITY CONFERENCE.—The Conference in Atlantic City gave me an opportunity to see American Unitarianism in its high-water season, and impressed me very deeply with the strength and freshness of life of the

movement in America. Happy, happy land! She can afford to breathe the air of pure transcendentalism! All the proceedings had the breath of freshness in them, and some of the addresses in particular were quite remarkable for their loftiness of thinking and impressiveness of style—e.g., that on “Immortality and Ethical Idealism,” and that on “The New Evangelism,” and that on “The Ideal of Life—From the Woman’s Point of View”—the last by a lady, Mrs. Anna Garlin Spencer, who spoke, without any notes, with a remarkable degree of power and subtlety of thought and expression—all on transcendental heights. It was actually the very exuberance and overflowing of life, taking the shape of thought and sporting about on the snow-clad peaks.

There was only one note that pierced, as the shrill cry of a wounded bird, through the serene atmosphere of that Conference Hall—it was that of Professor Du Bois, of Georgia—who spoke on “The Ideal of Life—from the point of view of the Negro.” Professor Du Bois is the author of a book called the “Souls of the Black Folk,” which I could not read, some parts of it, without tears. His address was inferior to none in point of ability and power of expression, and was full of a deep, agonising passion, which gave one at once a glimpse into the very heart of the Negro problem in America. This is the one black spot in that beautiful white life of the country—which, so far, not all the waters of the Atlantic and the Pacific—nay, not all the white blood shed in the cause, have been able to wash out, nor all the perfumes of Arabia (and Syria to boot) to sweeten—the dark remnant of a dark crime in the past, for which, Heaven knows, the Negro is not responsible. One possible solution suggested is the bodily transplantation of the whole coloured people either back to their original home, or better, perhaps, to some unoccupied land in some

region of the globe where they might have an entirely free field to themselves. America is rich, and undaunted in her enterprise, and this suggestion may some day be carried out. In talking to a friend about the matter, I ventured to make another suggestion. America is rich, America is inventive, too. Might she not find out something which could only change the pigment of the skin—this, and this only (not an outrageously preposterous boon to ask)—and, perhaps, if you are very particular, a few peculiarities also in the physiognomy of man—and thus establish a triumph of science over fate which would far outshine all the rest achieved in the past?

### III. MEADVILLE.

*September 29th—October 20th.*

Meadville is a quiet little town on the farthest western border of Pennsylvania, about a whole night and day's journey by express (with one or two breaks on the way) from Atlantic City, or New York, or Boston. Situated on an undulating soil, surrounded by pretty little hills on all sides, with quite romantic-looking woods, and ravines, and streamlets in the neighbourhood (where one can stroll about night and day without any tigers or serpents to be afraid of!), the whole town has an almost enchanted, sylvan look, which was made indescribably beautiful for me by the glorious, variegated colourings on the foliage during the three weeks of the Fall that I had the privilege of being there. Exactly such a spot would have been chosen by the *Rishis* of old in India to build their *asramas* (hermitages) in, where the *Rik* and *Sama Veda* hymns were taught and sung from generation to generation.

The Meadville Theological School is exactly such an *asrama*—only it is an American *asrama* of the twentieth century A.D. Its special object is to train students for the

Unitarian ministry, but it has no theological tests for admission, and it imposes no obligations as to the future career of its students. All admission and tuition are free. The subjects of study are: Bible criticism, Church history and the history of dogma, comparative religion, besides a general course in philosophy—including history of philosophy, ethics, and sociology. The students, besides this, have to go through a thorough practical training as a preparation for the ministry. One part of this training is for each student in turn to take the service and preach a sermon in the School Chapel, all the students and the professors being present, and this comes off once a week. There is a short service also every morning in the Chapel, all the students and professors being present, and this is taken by the professors and students in turn.

The school has at present three separate buildings, all situated on a small elevation commanding a fine view. One is set apart for the library (which contains about 30,000 volumes), besides containing one or two lecture rooms. The second, called the Divinity Hall, is used as the residence for the students. All the rooms are beautifully situated, commanding fine views, and every student gets the free use of a room on paying a nominal charge (20 dols. for the year) for heating and lighting expenses. There is accommodation in the Divinity Hall for between 40 and 50 students; but the present number is somewhat between 20 and 25. Lady students, and married students living with their families, have to find lodgings, elsewhere. There are at present two lady students. The number of lady ministers amongst the Unitarians in America is not very large. I met and heard two or three in Atlantic City. The Divinity Hall also contains the Chapel, the President's office, two lecture-rooms, a common reading-room, and a suite of two nicely-situated guest-rooms, in the last of

which it was my privilege, through the kindness of President Southworth, to put up during my stay in Meadville. The third building contains the dining hall and a music hall, besides a sitting-room. The whole institution had its origin through the liberality of a single Dutchman, Mr. E. Huidekoper, who settled in Meadville, and had a successful business there, and made an endowment for this College. The endowment has since grown by contributions from other sources.

President Southworth has offered a scholarship of 500 dols. (£100) a year, tenable for two years, to enable an Indian student, selected by the Brahmo Somaj Committee of Calcutta, to go through a course of studies in Meadville, by way of preparation for the Brahmo Somaj ministry or similar work in India. As the only expenses in Meadville will be 20 dols. a year for heat and light, and 3 dols. a week for board, it is expected that the scholarship will cover the passage expenses also of the student from and to India.

Only a short stay of a few weeks in Meadville, but beautiful are the memories that will be mine of that short stay. The privilege of feeling once more that I was a student amongst students, with free access to the lectures and to the library, and the sweet friendships, and the rambles through the woods and the ravines, and on the hills! It was my privilege also to be associated with Meadville through some sort of work of my own. I had the turn given me of taking the chapel service one morning. Also, in the same chapel hall, I gave a course of four lectures on "Brahmo Theology," my subjects being:—(1) "Relation of Theology to Religion," (2) "The Idea of God," (3) "The Ideal of Life," and (4) "Salvation and Immortality." The lectures were intended primarily for the College students, but the interest in the lectures grew,

and on the last two days the chapel was quite filled with a number of people from outside. In connection with the Adin Ballou Foundation of the College, which provides for lectures on sociological subjects, I had to give a lecture on "The Hindu Caste System: Its Origin, Principles, and Development," in the local Unitarian church. In the same church I had also to preach the sermon (my text being taken from Isaiah lii. 3: "For thus saith the Lord, ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money") in connection with the regular morning service one Sunday, and also to speak to the Sunday-school children in the morning, and the Young People's Association in the evening on another. I was invited also to speak at an evening gathering of the Meadville Literary Union.

THE ALLEGHENY COLLEGE.—This is a very interesting institution in Meadville outside the Unitarian body. It belongs to the Methodist denomination, and has a fine location on a hill, with splendid buildings, about a mile and a-half from the Unitarian College. It was this College that sent out Dr. Carey, of the famous Serampore Mission, to India, and later on Dr. (Bishop) Thoburn of Calcutta. The College works on the principle of co-education—one of the most interesting phenomena in America—and amongst its 350 alumni there are 100 ladies. The ladies have the same courses as the young men, attend lectures in the same classes, and have (most of them) dormitories within the College compound. It was my most interesting privilege, on the invitation of Dr. Crawford, the President of the College, to give an address of greetings to the students of this College one morning just at the close of the chapel service, and a more elaborate discourse another afternoon on "The System of Education in India."

## IV. PITTSBURGH.

*October 20th—October 25th.*

Pittsburgh is the city of blazing furnaces—a regular Vulcan's Smithy of the Twentieth Century ; only in proportions that twenty Vulcans of ancient mythology might stand amazed at—the city of iron and steel, and petroleum and natural gas. It was in Pittsburgh that Mr. Andrew Carnegie made that fortune which he has now established a whole agency to devise the means of distributing and spending in gifts and endowments. His gift to Pittsburgh is about twelve million dollars, which is now being busily employed in providing for Pittsburgh perhaps the finest library and art museum and college of technology in America. The Rev. L. W. Mason, minister of the local Unitarian church, my kind host and guide in Pittsburgh, spared no pains to show me as much of the local industries as possible, by taking me to the Exposition Buildings—which gave in miniature all the arts and industries of America—to one of the local mills, and forming plans about taking me to ever so many other mills and factories. Alas, he had no idea (else, how he would pity me!) how blissfully ignorant I was about these things, and how my fondest, sweetest memory in connection with Pittsburgh will be, not about these things ; but—well, something about which I must not write anything here !

On Sunday, the 22nd October, I preached the sermon (my text being John xiii. 35 : “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another”) in the Unitarian church, in connection with the morning service, Mr. Mason having introduced me to his congregation in very cordial and brotherly terms. At the close of the sermon, Mr. Mason proposed that his congregation should send their cordial greetings to the Brahmo Somaj



in India, upon which the whole congregation stood up as a sign of accepting the motion. There is usually one service only in the Unitarian church on Sundays, but that day there was another service in the evening to give me an opportunity of speaking again to the congregation on "The Brahmo Somaj."

On Tuesday, the 24th October, I visited a local grammar school in the morning and watched the absorbingly beautiful lessons and operations in the kindergarten class for about an hour. At 9 a.m. I was taken to the Carnegie library, where I had to speak to the Ladies' Training Class in connection with the juvenile section of the library. This is a very interesting feature of libraries in America. A whole section of the library, with appropriate literature, pictures, reading rooms, &c., is set apart for little children from the age of six upwards, and there are a number of ladies, specially trained for the purpose, in special charge of this section to give the children the necessary guidance. The class that I had to address consisted of about fifty or sixty ladies, who were being specially trained for the juvenile section of the Carnegie library. They wanted me to speak about libraries in India! Alas, alas, what could I say? But I did speak, and about libraries in India, too, the Presidency College Library and the Calcutta Imperial Library, but much more about the Rigveda, and how they carried the hymns in their memory from generation to generation, and how a Sanskrit scholar was expected to be a walking library, and Buddha and Buddhism, and Hiouen Tsang and the University of Nalanda! My audience, however, were immensely interested; they forgot that I was wandering from the point, and when I sat down, they wanted me to continue the stories about Buddha and Buddhism, which I did with the greatest pleasure!

At the close of the lecture, Dr. Hopkins, who is in charge of the whole institution took us over the whole library buildings (I should say only one-third ; for, as Dr. Hopkins remarked, that is the portion we had done in full two hours), which are still in the process of construction. They will cost six million dollars. The number of volumes in the library is a million and a-half. The juvenile section is one special feature, another is the travelling library, *i.e.*, sets of books lent out to the schools by instalments according to their needs.

From the library we walked over to the Carnegie College of Technology (which also is still incomplete), where I was invited by Dr. Hammerschlag, the Director, to speak to the students assembled together in the hall. My subject was, "The Relation between Utility and Beauty in Art, with some Special Reference to India." My audience, including Dr. Hammerschlag, were very much interested in what I said, and Dr. Hammerschlag—who, by the way, had twice been in India and visited the Presidency College, Calcutta—was kind enough to promise every assistance should any Indian students ever come to the Pittsburgh College of Technology. This college, when complete, will perhaps be the best of its kind in America, with special advantages by virtue of its situation for the study of mining and allied industries, while the charge for tuition is nil for Americans and only 30 dols. a year for aliens. The tuition fee for the Boston Technological College is 150 dols. a year for all.

#### V. BUFFALO AND THE NIAGARA FALLS.

*October 25th—October 27th.*

The Rev. Mr. Brown, Unitarian minister, was my kind host in Buffalo, and my guide to the Niagara Falls.

When I arrived at Buffalo on the afternoon of the 25th, Mr. Brown had invited a number of his friends to his house, to whom I had to give a talk, which, with the number of questions I had to answer, took us rather far into the night, on religious and social conditions in India.

Early the next morning Mr. Brown took me to the Lafayette High School. It was a splendid model whereby to study the public school system of America. The whole system of education in America is simply wonderful. There are State Universities as well as private Universities, State schools and colleges as well as private, denominational as well as purely non-sectarian and undenominational schools and colleges. There is no central control by the Federal Government over education. Each State has its own laws, and, practically, it is ultimately each city that provides its own educational institutions with full financial and administrative control. And yet over this vast continent, the spirit, methods, and courses of study, are practically so uniform in all the educational institutions throughout as to make them really parts of what might be called a common national organisation for education. It is only the universities and colleges that charge any fees for tuition (though some of them, too, are free for native Americans), all the rest are free. Not only are all the elementary schools and grammar schools and high schools absolutely free for all, but it is the ambition of each city now to have the finest buildings for its schools, and the finest equipments in the way of libraries, laboratories, and gymnasiums. In most cases the schools also give away books and the simpler appliances of study free to the students, and in rural districts 'buses are provided free to carry the children to and from the school when they have to come from some distance. Wonderful as the whole system is, and wonderful as is the amount of expenditure

that the whole country ungrudgingly, nay, enthusiastically bears to keep it going—it is the supreme national need of American life. Thousands of emigrants come every year into the country from all possible nationalities in the world, speaking all possible languages, and in all possible stages of mental development. Under the compulsory and free system of education, their children, at least, are immediately put into the public schools, taught to speak the same language, and moulded into the one common national cast of American life. These schools are the nurseries of American citizenship. The uniformity of ideas and ideals which they manage to circulate into the current of life throughout this vast continent is very striking.

I give here the respective number of the educational institutions of various descriptions, taken from the latest report of the Commissioner of Education for the States:—

1. Universities and Colleges, 455 ; out of these 334 have the system of co-education, *i.e.*, young men and young ladies studying together.
2. Colleges for women alone, 14.
3. Colleges of Technology, 43.
4. Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges, 49.
5. Professional Colleges.—Colleges of Theology, 153. Law, 99. Medicine, 146. Dentistry, 54. Pharmacy, 61. Veterinary Medicine, 11.
6. Normal Schools, 286.
7. High (Secondary) Schools, 8490. Every public school has the system of co-education. The average is 60 per cent. girls, and 40 per cent. boys.
8. Manual and Industrial Training Schools, 145.
9. Commercial and Business Schools, 516.

10. Training Schools for Nurses, 552.
11. Schools for the Coloured, 136.
12. Industrial and Reformatory Schools, 96.
13. Schools for the Blind, 39.
14. Schools for the Deaf, 56. Also 54 Day-schools and 17 Private.
15. Schools for the Feeble-minded, 34.

I may add that the population of the United States is 80 millions, *i.e.*, about double that of Great Britain, and a little above a fourth of that of India.

The Lafayette High School of Buffalo is the latest of the three public schools possessed by the city. It has a very fine building, which cost one million dollars (30 lakhs of rupees), and has a library, laboratory, and gymnasium to match. Mr. Detmers, the President, took me first to the hall, where all the students were assembled together for a short morning service before beginning the regular school work. The number was 1200—about 700 girls, seated in the gallery, and 500 boys seated down below in the hall. When the short service was over, I had to give an address of greetings. I spoke of India and her natural scenery and beauties of art and architecture ; and how every hill and stream of the country was bound up in the heart of every Indian with the strongest sentiment of religion. My words were very enthusiastically received ; they struck a chord in the heart of the audience. The President rose and asked them all to sing the American National Anthem. When that was finished, I spoke again a few words of thanks out of my heart. Then the President stood up and proposed cordial greetings to India, and to the Presidency College of Calcutta. He said the boys would express their greetings by the characteristic American yell. "It was,

perhaps, rather barbarous, but Professor Sen must see some genuine American ways." Then the 500 boys shouted and yelled (something corresponding to the British "Hurrah") so as to make the walls of the hall burst. When they had done, the President said again, "Now the girls will express their greetings in their own way." And then the 700 girls stood up and sang together some short beautiful tunes, the words of which I did not understand, but it was a scene which I shall never forget. Then the students dispersed to their several classes, and the President took me round through every part of the building, including several of the lecture-rooms.

This was followed by a very pleasant automobile drive --through the streets and parks of Buffalo, past the Zoological Gardens and the Art Museum—a beautiful structure of white marble, and the bank of the Niagara River, where it just emerges out of Lake Erie, with a view of the Canadian bank on the other side. When we came back home from the drive Mr. Brown was ready immediately to take me to the Niagara Falls.

THE NIAGARA FALLS.—People have asked me if I was disappointed at the Niagara Falls. I have found it difficult to answer the question. They are a very striking natural phenomenon, plain and simple for any man to behold, but what simply appeals to the eye and the ear counts as very little towards the real satisfaction of the soul. The very presence of so many people on the spot—whose every look and movement betrays that they are there as mere sightseers—acts as a serious disturbance. I wish I could be there all alone, or in the company of one or two chosen friends. The whole thing, I know, would in that case have a different meaning for me. Then, again, it is often forgotten that the appreciation of beauty is not a question

of measurement. You could no more compare the Niagara Falls with any other Falls in the world deserving the name, and say which were grander (except in a very superficial sense) or more beautiful, than you could compare them with the Alps and say which were the more sublime. The true significance of the Niagara Falls will depend upon the associations that the genius and soul of America succeeds ultimately in connecting with them. If I lived near the Falls I would visit them in the morning and the evening, in sunlight and moonlight and starlight, and ask if all that ceaseless rolling of the waters meant unrest or rest, if the sound that they made wanted to rouse me to action or to lull me to sleep ; if that unceasing flow meant senseless waste or the inexhaustible abundance and munificence of the storehouse of Nature ; if that dance the rapids meant the writhings and wriggings of a tortured spirit, or, indeed, the dance of a boundless joy ; and, above all, I would pray that in their presence I might forget all the waters and forget all the sounds, and forget all these questionings, and "rapt in wonder, worship the Invisible alone !"

After coming back from the Niagara Falls in the evening, I had to speak in Mr. Brown's church at night on "Indian Educational Problems," and that closed the day and my work in Buffalo.

## VI. TORONTO.

*October 27th—October 31st.*

It was a cold, wet morning when my train steamed up into the Toronto station, but when I found Mr. Sunderland waiting for me on the platform, and as he drove me to his

house, my mind was carried back to another morning in 1896, when I, in the company of one or two friends, received Mr. Sunderland at the Howrah station, and drove him to the India Club in Calcutta. Mr. Sunderland has not forgotten India. I found him surrounded with books and magazines and papers about India, and he has been recently lecturing on Indian famines, besides keeping his congregation pretty well informed about the Brahmo Somaj movement. In fact, the whole current of his thought and conversation shows that India occupies his mind perhaps more than any other subject.

Mr. Sunderland had secured for me an opportunity to meet the President and Faculty of the Toronto University by an invitation to lunch with them in the University buildings in the afternoon of the day on which I arrived. The Toronto University has a set of very fine buildings upon fine grounds, but neither this University nor that of Montreal (which I visited later, and which is equally fine) is what we should call residential. In the matter of living, the professors, as well as the students, shift for themselves as best they can, only there are certain clubs located in the University buildings where they can occasionally meet. It is noticeable that Canada has not found the residential system either necessary or particularly desirable.

After the lunch, Dr. Abbott and Dr. Kirschmann, Professors of Psychology, took us all over the psychological laboratory of the University, and treated us with a number of very interesting illustrations of the experimental method in psycho-physics.

On Sunday, the 29th, I had to preach the sermon in Mr. Sunderland's church, my text being "The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a mustard seed," in connection with the morning service, and the same evening Mr. Sunderland



took me to Hamilton (about an hour's journey by train from Toronto), where similarly I had to preach the sermon in connection with the evening service in the local Unitarian church.

On Monday, the 30th, I was invited to lunch with Mr. Goldwin Smith. He is now verging nearly upon ninety, and is a little deaf, but has a very lively interest in Indian affairs, and particularly the future of India. It was a privilege to be with him in his fine study, and listen to his talk for an hour or two. In the afternoon I had to speak at the Philosophical Club of the University on "Present-day Currents of Religious Thought in India." It was a hard task to present the subject in an intelligible shape in one hour's discourse to a Canadian audience, and so it was a great gratification to me, when at the end of the lecture Dr. Abbott, President of the Club, observed that the discourse gave him a clearer grasp of the conditions of religious thought in India than he had from anything he had read or heard before, and Dr. Hume, Professor of Philosophy in the University, suggested in his short speech that an interchange of professors on the principle recently adopted by the German Emperor, might help India and Canada to understand each other better in the future.

The same night I had to speak again at the Unitarian Club on "India and the Brahmo Somaj," and nowhere have I found an audience that listened to me with deeper appreciation or sympathy. There, again, was the spirit of Mr. Sunderland in evidence.

## VII. MONTREAL.

*October 31st—November 2nd.*

It was the very cordial invitation of Rev. Mr. Barnes, Unitarian Minister, at the desire of his congregation to hear

from me about the Brahmo Somaj, that took me to Montreal, and strangely enough, during my two days' stay in that, to me, barely heard of Canadian City, I felt as if I was amongst my own kith and kin. An hour or so after my arrival on the evening of the 31st I was called upon by a lady and gentleman (Mrs. and Mr. Loud), who told me they had seen and heard Keshub Chunder Sen at Birmingham in 1871, when they must themselves have been very young, and the next evening, when they invited me to tea, Mrs. Loud showed me a photograph of his of that time, which she had since cherished with the fondest affection. On the morning of November 1st, Mr. Barnes took me to the McGill University (it is delightful to find how at Toronto and Montreal each University claims to be superior to the other!), where President Peterson, who spoke very feelingly about India and his brother, Peterson, the Sanskrit scholar, who had been a professor in the Elphinstone College, Bombay, took us very kindly over the University Library and Museum. At night I spoke to a very sympathetic audience in Mr. Barnes' Church on the Brahmo Somaj, and the next morning found me in a railway train rushing past through a most charming country to Boston.

#### VIII. BOSTON.

*November 2nd—November 15th.*

Boston is the headquarters of American Unitarianism, the centre of American literary life, the seat of the Harvard (Cambridge) University, the first and the greatest in America—the city in or round about which lived and worked Channing, and Emerson, and Theodore Parker, Longfellow, Hawthorne, Thoreau, and Lowell. I stayed in Boston, off and on, for a fortnight, but the most interest-

ing part of it was that given to visiting some of its charming suburbs.

On Monday, November 6th, I spoke to the Cambridge Association of Ministers, after lunch, in the house of Dr. Samuel Eliot, President of the American Unitarian Association, on "The Principles and Organisation of the Brahmo Somaj." On Saturday, November 11th, I had to speak at the Twentieth Century Club (where the previous Saturday I had the pleasure of listening to "Mark Twain" amongst the speakers), on "Some Indian Problems in the Twentieth Century." On Sunday, November 12th, I had to preach in the West Newton Church, the text for my sermon being: 1 Corinthians xii. 12, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ." On Tuesday, November 14th, I had the pleasure, through the kind introduction of a friend, of visiting and being shown all over the Perkins Institution and School for the Blind in South Boston. My fondest associations, however, with my stay in Boston, will be:—(1) My visit to Concord; and (2) my several visits to the Harvard University at Cambridge.

CONCORD.—It was a clear, beautiful afternoon, when about half an hour's railway journey brought me from Boston to Concord. My kind and gracious hostess, friend and guide there, Mrs. Keyes, to whom I had been introduced by Mr. Southworth in Atlantic City, and who had graciously invited me to Concord, was waiting for me at the station with her carriage and drove me straight to all the places of interest in Concord one after another. First, we came to the Battle Ground, the historic site of the Concord fight in the War of Independence, where just on the other side of the bridge across the quiet Concord river, in a secluded spot of romantic beauty, stands the memorial

statue of the "minute man," with Emerson's famous lines about the fight on the pedestal. Then we drove, with quickened heart-beats, through quiet, lonely woods, over narrow winding wood paths, down into the "Sleepy Hollow," where Emerson lies buried. The spirit of silence is there, and a breath and whisper that is not of this world. There is the tomb of Hawthorne, and of Thoreau, and so many others, but over Emerson's grave there is not a carved stone nor a chiselled slab, but only a rough, simple block, so suggestive, so beautiful! From "Sleepy Hollow" we drove through nearly a mile of absolutely secluded woods to the lonely Walden pond, a long, narrow, winding lake with wooded banks, where Thoreau built his hut, and where on a ledge on the other side was pointed out to me the spot that Emerson loved as "My Garden." The moon, nearly full, was shining clear and bright in the sky, when we retraced our way back from the pond, and the woods, with quick-beating hearts again to Emerson's house. The pines he loved are still there, standing utterly bare by the side of the little study where, as Miss Emerson (Emerson's daughter, the sole occupant of the house now) told me things are exactly in the same order in which they were when Emerson died. It is by no means a large library, but each volume speaks of the close, constant, and loving touch of the master. The first volumes that my eyes lighted upon were, of course, a set of the works of Thomas Carlyle, the next were, The Vishnu Purana, The Bhagabat Purana, The Laws of Manu, and a volume of Hafiz!

HARVARD COLLEGE.—It does one's heart good to meet in a foreign land a friend who has seen and knows something of one's own country. Such a friend was Dr. J. H. Woods, Professor of Sanskrit Philosophy (along with Professor Lanman) in the Harvard University, who had been to India, and spent three months in Kashmir. He

took me to his lecture one morning to his small class to whom he lectures on Hindu philosophy (that morning, however, he was lecturing on Descartes), at the close of which he asked me to give a short talk to the boys. Next we went together to the lecture-room of Professor James. Professor James gave us a cordial welcome. Just before beginning his lecture, however, he came down from his chair and platform and addressed me. "You are a Monist, I daresay," he said, "because everyone from India, I take it, is ; then you will be interested in what I am going to say, for I am going to criticise that position." "I shall be delighted to listen to your criticism, Professor," was my reply. And it was delightful to listen to his humorous flings at the "Philosophy of the Absolute," with special reference to the teachings of Professor Royce, whom he elsewhere calls his "colleague and master," and who, as Dr. Woods told me, was probably pulling Professor James to pieces in the next lecture-room. "They are very good friends of each other," added Dr. Woods, and are next door neighbours at Cambridge.

On the evening of Monday, the 13th November, I had to speak at the Harvard Divinity School, where Professor James, Professor Fenn, and some other Professors were present. My subject was: "God, Nature, and the Soul in Hindu Philosophy." At the close of the lecture, the whole audience was very warm and enthusiastic. There was one Japanese student from whom I received a very cordial invitation to Japan. But there was none whose enthusiasm touched me more than that of Professor James. He took me to his house, and was loth to part with me, though it was getting far into the night. I flatter myself that I had succeeded in touching some hidden chord of his soul. It seemed to me that the "Philosophy of the Absolute," or the "Hegclism," that he takes exception to,

is that know-all, self-complacent type of dialectics which is the very madness of metaphysics, but it is entirely different when we come to an Absolute that can be worshipped and loved and held communion with, that can be the object of a living religion, a *real motive* to life and conduct. His "humanism," or "pragmatism," as he calls it, appears to me to be a very good, a very noble thing, and what he calls his "pluralism," I interpret simply as an attempt to provide a speculative basis for what would save human responsibility in conduct, and that humility and receptivity in the sphere of knowledge which would teach us to observe, and watch, and study, and learn and obey, instead of pursuing and worshipping our own shadows in the Infinite.

#### IX. NORTHAMPTON, MASS.

*November 15th—November 18th.*

Northampton, in Massachusetts, is the city of Jonathan Edwards, whom Principal Fairbairn, of Mansfield College, Oxford, describes as "not only the greatest of all the thinkers that America has produced, but also the highest speculative genius of the eighteenth century"—"in a far higher degree than Spinoza, a God-intoxicated man." I saw the church in which he used to preach, and a monument was pointed out to me in a graveyard raised in his honour, though he was actually buried elsewhere.

The most interesting institution in Northampton is the Smith College, which is purely a college for ladies. There are 334 colleges (or universities) in America that have the system of co-education, *i.e.*, young men and ladies studying together. The largest of these is the University of Chicago, which contains 2206 men and 2257 lady students. There are 121 colleges for men only, the Harvard University, with its 5136 alumni, being the

largest ; and fourteen for women only. Of these last the Smith College is the largest, counting so many as 1200 ladies on its rolls ! It was on the morning of the 16th that I had the privilege of being present at the chapel service of the College. There must have been at least one thousand ladies present, as I was told, that morning, all singing and praying together before beginning their regular college work for the day. I was then taken over several of the buildings. Oh, what an experience. The whole place was full of ladies as a hive is full of bees ; endless groups and trains of "sweet girl-graduates" that would be, with their eyes lighted up by a touch of Newton or Plato, their books and note-books in hand, walking about from one building to another, or one lecture-room to another, with an air of purposefulness, stateliness, and grace that the sculptor of Athena might watch and study with profit ! There, on those extensive grounds, were, besides the chapel, the lecture-rooms, the library, the museum, the dormitories—nay, they have their gymnasium, and their rowing on the river ! The sweetest to look upon, and the most fitting in the nature of things, perhaps, were the groups of ladies in the crystal hothouses, seated or standing by the ferns, and the palms, and the orchids, and the flowers, making sketches or fitting up experiments in plant physiology ! Most interesting of all, perhaps, was it to be told that last year these ladies had got up on the stage, among themselves, the Sanskrit play of "Sakuntalá"—*i.e.*, a stage adaptation of Monier Williams' English translation of the drama ! American lady-students dressed up as King Dushmanta and Sakuntalá, and Priyambadá, and all that ! I was fortunate enough to get a few photographs taken from the stage at the time of the performance.

The same afternoon I was invited to speak to these ladies about India. There was a gathering of about five

hundred or more ladies, to whom President Seeley (strangely enough, the College tolerates a few *men*-professors and a *man*-president, who, in fact, I was told, has built it up from the very beginning) introduced me in graceful and cordial terms. I spoke to them about India, her religion, her literature, about Valmiki and Kalidasa, about the four *asramas*, and the Hindu ideal of womanhood, and the modern university system.

The same night I had to speak again about India at the Nineteenth Century Club—a purely ladies' club. My kind hostess, whose special invitation had brought me to Northampton, is the President of that Club, and at her instance the special subject taken up for study by the Club during this year is "India." A number of subjects have been allotted to the members, and each will be taken up for discussion at each successive meeting of the Club, when the Essayist for the evening produces her paper. A library with select books on India is placed at the disposal of the members. The following are some of the subjects:—Natural Features, Flora, Ethnology, Caste, Isms of India, By way of Adornment, Tiffin, the Mysterious River and the Holy City, Hindu Women, Kipling's India, Festivals, Poetry of India. My presence and my words were naturally very welcome to the members of this Club.

The following day I visited the Clarks School for the deaf and dumb, and at night I spoke at the Unitarian Church on the Brahmo Somaj, and the next morning left Northampton for Waltham.

## XX. WALTHAM.

*November 18th—November 21st.*

At Waltham, which is practically one of the suburbs of Boston, I had only one engagement, *viz.*, to preach in



the local Unitarian Church on the morning of Sunday, November 19th. As this happened to be the birthday of Keshub Chunder Sen, my sermon had a special reference to him, my text being taken from John xiv. 20, "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you."

This brought my tour and work in America to a close. On Tuesday, November 21st, I sailed from Boston in the Cunard Liner R.M.S. Ivernia, and after a smooth voyage arrived in England on the morning of Thursday, the 30th November.

Dr. J. T. Sunderland of the American Unitarian Church thus writes about his visit to America :—

"One coming in the winter of 1905-6 was Professor Benoyendra Nath Sen, who, besides delivering a series of remarkable lectures at the Theological School in Meadville, lectured or preached in perhaps a dozen other places,—everywhere impressing those who heard or came into personal contact with him, by his learning, the philosophical grasp and lucidity of his thought and his deep piety.

During his visit to America, Professor Sen very naturally spent a longer time than anywhere else at Meadville, the seat of the Unitarian Theological School where he gave a series of lectures. However, he visited Boston, New York and a number of other cities, and formed the acquaintance of a considerable number of eminent educators, writers, scholars and religious leaders of the Unitarian and other Churches. He spent four days with me in my home, which at that time was in Toronto, Canada. They were days never to be forgotten. He preached for me on Sunday morning, telling the interesting story of the Brahmo Somaj, its history, its work and its ideals, and gave two evening addresses, one to the Women's Alliance of my Church on "Woman in India,"

and the other to my Browning Club, on "The Literature of India."

One day it was my privilege to take him for a long visit with Dr. Goldwin Smith, the most distinguished, honored and beloved citizen of our city, if not of the whole Dominion of Canada. The two great men had two wonderful hours together. Another day we spent at the Toronto University, where he met many of the leading professors, and accepted an invitation to deliver an address the day following before the Philosophical Society of the University.

He took for the subject of that address, "Present Currents of Religious thought in India." The attendance was large. It was the freely expressed judgment of practically all present, that the utterance was one of the most illuminating and profound, one of the most masterly manifestations of philosophical and religious thinking, that the University had ever known. A strong desire was expressed for him to give further addresses, but his engagements elsewhere would not permit.

During those four days of his stay with me, we often prayed together, for when in his society nothing seemed so natural, so inevitable or so beautiful as prayer. We spent many happy and too-fast-flying hours in earnest talk,—about India, her religious condition, her social condition, her prospects for the future, religiously and politically; about his family, about the Brahmo Somaj, about my visit to India and what it meant to me; and about his visit to America, his various experiences here, and the impressions he was receiving.

He had just come from Meadville, and we talked much about his experiences there. On his way from Meadville to Toronto he had spent a day at Niagara Falls, and one day as we took a long walk, he described to me in most

impressive words the emotions of sublimity, awe and worship which had been awakened in his soul by his contact with that wonderful manifestation of nature's power and grandeur.

When the time came for him to go away and we parted, it was with the hope that some time he would come to America again. I think he dreamed that he might. In the providence of God it was not to be so. But we are glad and thankful that at least he came to us once.

I must not close without saying how deeply appreciative I am of the generous and efficient service which for a long term of years Professor Sen rendered as the Secretary of the General Brahmo Somaj Committee, appointed when I was in India in 1896, to manage the selection of Brahmo students to come for theological training to Oxford and later to Meadville. If the scheme proved successful I am aware that the success was largely due to his interest in it and to his great wisdom and care in carrying it out. Professor Sen was taken away too early to give us the books that we hoped to have from him. But even more valuable than any products of his pen were his character, his personality, his aims and ideals, his spirit and his life."

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"Long has the Pilgrim been under a promise to deliver fresh messages to those that are dear to him, since he sent his first greetings home from a foreign land. Day after day, day after day, since that, has seen the execution of that promise put off. Since his return home there has been looming before his eyes, writ glaringly large on the face of the heavens, a big interrogatory,—mystic, inscrutable, like a comet ;—the storms have come and swept away the little shelter wherein he had fondly hoped to rest his

weary limbs ;—the petty ties of sect and party, like loose treacherous fetters, have almost imperceptibly dropped off ; and he stands to-day, under the sky, in the bosom of the eternal, with a freer, deeper love for all than he could have ever felt before.

Around him a deep loneliness,—all party shibboleths, the more clamorous they try to become, the more they seem to sink into a dead silence ; all party-preachers, the more restless busy-bodies they want to show themselves, the more they seem to recede into futile ineptitude. In the silent recesses,—the faces of the shining ones, smiling through their agonies to behold what their own have done with them,—their own so-called followers, their own beloved ones !

Would that he might sink in that everlasting silence, —unto all the beloved ones whose companionship life's long and wide pilgrimage has blessed him withal, cry with one full-souled breath—God be with ye ! Speech, speech, —why should a man speak at all ?—Unless he is pressed by business, or hunger and thirst, or sickness perhaps ? The only other speech that is in its own nature justifiable or permissible even, is that which comes out of the fulness of Joy,—which is even like unto the speech of God himself,—a creation,—the efflorescence of Bliss !

And yet what is it that says unto one : Woe unto thee if thou speak not ! If the breath within thee be God-given,—speak, speak with thy full breath. Speak of God, speak of the Truth, speak of the sanctities and beatitudes of life, its trusts and obligations, its burdens and responsibilities. There are many in whom the thought is only half-articulate, the feeling trembles, diffident and shy, on the lips and cannot shape itself in word or action for want of a deeper, surer self-knowledge. There are many with whom thou hast walked together, whose feet are groping

about in the mist ;—and they want to hear some clear voice that will take them out of the mist. There are those that have loved thee, yea even thee ; speak, speak if but to tell them thou too lovest, and shalt not cease to love even when the worlds are blotted out and thy pilgrimage takes thee into the endless deep !

The pilgrim bows his head down—and replies—Lord, let Thy servant obey !”

But alas ! the Pilgrim spake no more. It was ordained otherwise. Yes, the servant obeyed the Lord, not in speech, not in speaking out how he loved and won’t cease to love even when the worlds would be blotted out unto him and his pilgrimage took him into the endless deep. Yea, the worlds were blotted out to him and he was taken into the endless deep, so early, and by the Will of the Lord he was to breathe in purer atmosphere, he was to be verily in God, in Truth, in the sanctities and beatitudes of life immortal.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### BRAHMO SOMAJ ACTIVITIES.

#### **The Brahmo Somaj Committee.\***

The Brahmo Somaj Committee originated with the visit to India in January, 1896, of the Rev. J. T. Sunderland, as representative of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association. There was a gathering to welcome him at the Albert Hall, and another to bid him farewell at the India Club, and his addresses on both of these occasions, as well as at other meetings during his stay in Calcutta, touched the heart of the Brahmo community. The proposal was

\*Report of the Brahmo Somaj Committee, February 1896—February 1905.

discussed to have, if possible, some sort of a permanent organization for co-operation between the Brahmo Somaj and the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, and on his way back to England, Mr. Sunderland gave a definite shape to this proposal in a letter which he wrote to Rev. P. C. Mozoomdar from Bombay, dated February 10, 1896, from which we make the following extracts :—

Mr. Sunderland's letter :—"I shall not forget that loving and brotherly good-bye meeting at the India Club with which my ten days among you all was brought to an end. And now I hasten to carry out the suggestion made there of writing you about the appointment of a permanent committee made up of members of the various divisions of the Brahmo Somaj to represent you all in future communications with the British and Foreign Unitarian Association regarding practical methods of co-operation. \* \* \* \* Appointing this committee does not pledge you to any *definite way* of co-operation. It only expresses your desire to co-operate, and pledges you to co-operate *if mutually satisfactory plans of method of co-operation can be agreed upon*. It shows your interest in co-operation, and creates an instrumentality whereby it is hoped to make co-operation sooner or later a reality. It was requested that in this communication I note down some of the suggestions looking in the direction of co-operation which various persons have made. I cannot note all. Here are a few, perhaps the ones which have been most urged :—

- (1) The sending of an English Unitarian Missionary to Calcutta, to work in harmony with all branches of the Somaj.
- (2) The establishing and carrying on of a joint Unitarian and Brahmo Somaj Post Office Mission in Calcutta.
- (3) The supervision of the sale of Unitarian books, perhaps by some one of the book-sellers of Calcutta.

- (4) A joint Girls' School for all sections of the Brahmo Somaj. Possibly the uniting of the Brahmo Balika Sikshalaya and the Victoria College.
- (5) The taking of such steps toward the creation in the future, as soon as it can be brought about, by the joint efforts of the Brahmo Somajes, the English Unitarians, and the American Unitarians, of a strong and high-grade Theological School in Calcutta—a school manned by professors of such ability and learning as will command respect and attention not only all over India but in Europe and America.
- (6) In the absence of such a Theological School in India, or until it can be created, the sending of one or more young men of ability each year, to Manchester College, Oxford, England, for theological education.
- (7) The creation of a stronger and more influential theistic periodical in Calcutta by English help, and possibly by the consolidation of some or all of the existing theistic periodicals.
- (8) Direct money help from the English Unitarians for your Brahmo Missionary, educational or philanthropic work.

As there are various interests to be represented, and I am outside of all and yet feel a very deep and earnest sympathy with all, perhaps it may not be out of place for me to suggest the committee. My only thought in the names I select is to get a committee that shall be wise, strong, thoroughly representative, and confided in and trusted by all. I therefore take the liberty to suggest the following names :

As representing the New Dispensation :—

Pundit Gour Govind Roy, Mr. Trailokya Nath Sanyal, Professor Benoyendra Nath Sen and Mr. P. C. Mozoomdar.

As representing the Sadharan Brahmo Somaj :—

Mr. A. M. Bose, Pundit Shivanath Shastri, Professor Heramba Chunder Moitra, and Dr P. K. Ray.

As representing the Adi Brahmo Somaj :—

Mr. Dwijendra Nath Tagore, Mr. Rabindra Nath Tagore and Pundit Priya Nath Shastri.

(Of course, I do not know that all these gentlemen will accept a place on the committee, though the warmth of sympathy with the Unitarians of England evinced by all, and the general desire expressed for closer co-operation makes me feel some confidence that they will accept heartily. If, however, any one does not, for any reason, see his way clear to accept, then I would suggest that the other members of the committee elect to fill his place by another who will be the best representative possible of the Brahmo Somaj to which he belongs. Of course it should be borne in mind that my suggestions of names are only *suggestions*.

Mr. Sunderland's letter was discussed at a conference representing the different sections of the Brahmo Somaj, held at Peace Cottage, on February 17th, 1896, at which it was resolved to organize the Brahmo Somaj Committee with the members suggested in the letter, two more being added, *viz.*, Babu Umesh Chunder Dutt, and Babu Mohendra Nath Bose. At the first meeting of the Committee thus started, held at Peace Cottage on March 19th, 1896,—the various proposals contained in Mr. Sunderland's letter as constituting the scope of co-operation between the Committee and the British and Foreign Unitarian Association were adopted with slight modifications,—proposals marked 4, 5 and 7 being put off as not



being immediately practicable. Also, Rev. P. C. Mozoomdar was appointed to be Secretary, and Professor B. N. Sen, Assistant Secretary. The Executive Committee of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, at a meeting held on July 8th, 1896, gave a "full and careful consideration" to these proposals, and in his letter, dated July 9th, 1896, the Secretary, Rev. W. Copeland Bowie wrote so say that the "Committee recognize in the members of the various Somajes, fellow-labourers in the promotion of truth and righteousness." By way of giving effect to some of the proposals, the same letter contained the intimation that the British and Foreign Unitarian Association offered a scholarship of £100 a year "for a young man of ability, high character, and religious earnestness, for two years' study of Theology and Philosophy, at Manchester College, Oxford," on certain special conditions, and also that it was "endeavouring to arrange for sending out an English Missionary, who will be instructed to do everything in his power to sympathise and work in harmony with all branches of the Brahmo Somaj, and who will no doubt be willing to co-operate with them in promoting Educational, Philanthropic and Temperance work in India."

## II.

### CONSTITUTION AND RULES.

The Brahmo Somaj Committee has all along been working with a very simple constitution ; but recently the necessity having arisen of getting the Committee registered in order to provide for the safe custody of the funds at its disposal, the following constitution and rules were adopted at a meeting held at the Albert Hall, on July 20th, 1904.

I. The object of the Brahmo Somaj Committee is to carry on educational and philanthropic work in India, and

the diffusion of useful knowledge by the joint operation of the different sections of the Brahmo Somaj in co-operation, where practicable or necessary, with the Unitarian or other Associations, or individual or individuals, in England or elsewhere.

II The following shall be members of the Brahmo Somaj Committee :—

- (a) Mr. Satyendra Nath Tagore, Babu Rabindra Nath Tagore, Babu Khiteendra Nath Tagore, and Pundit Preonath Sastri—representing the Adi Brahmo Somaj.
- (b) Rev. P. C. Mozoomdar, Rev. Troilakya Nath Sanyal, Babu Mohit Chunder Sen, Babu Baroda Prosad Ghosh, Babu Promotho Loll Sen and Babu Benoyendra Nath Sen—representing the New Dispensation Somaj.
- (c) Mr. A. M. Bose, Dr. P. K. Roy, Pundit Sivanath Sastri, Babu Umesh Chunder Dutt, Babu Heramba Chunder Moitra and Babu Hem Chunder Sarkar—representing the Sadharan Brahmo Somaj.

III. In addition to the above, persons fully sympathising with the objects of the Institution may be elected members of the Brahmo Somaj Committee at any of its sittings, or at sittings of the Council.

IV. The Council or Governing Body of the Brahmo Somaj Committee shall consist of—

- (a) Gentlemen mentioned in Rule II, or those appointed in their place by the Council,—who shall be its life-members ; and of
- (b) Representatives elected by members mentioned in Rule III, in the proportion of one representative to every ten members or fraction thereof, provided, however, that the total

number of such representatives shall not exceed five. These representatives shall be elected annually on or about the 1st of February.

The Council shall transact the business of the Society.

V. Any vacancies amongst the members referred to in Rule II, or in Rule IV (a), or amongst the representative members of the Council referred to in Rule IV (b), shall be filled up by the rest of the Council, in the last case until the time of the next annual election.

VI. The Brahmo Somaj Committee shall have a Secretary, an Assistant Secretary, and such other office-bearers as the Council by a majority of three-fifths may decide. In the absence of the Secretary, the Assistant Secretary will exercise his powers. The office-bearers will be elected by the Council for a term of two years.

VII. The office-bearers of the Brahmo Somaj Committee shall also be office-bearers of the Council.

They as well as the representative members of the Council shall hold office until the election of their successors, and shall be eligible for re-election.

VIII. The first office-bearers shall be elected on the adoption of these rules, and hold their office till the next annual meeting. Thenceforth they shall be elected at every alternate annual meeting of the Council.

IX. Four members shall form a quorum at meetings of the Council. The quorum at ordinary or special meetings of the Brahmo Somaj Committee shall be such as may be laid down from time to time by the Council.

X. Except in case of emergency, the Council shall meet on a not less than three days' notice given by the Secretary, when there is any business to be transacted, or at the written request of at least two members of the

Council who shall specify in their letter the business to be transacted.

XI. There shall be an annual meeting of the Society on or about the 3rd of February of each year, at which the annual report and accounts shall be presented, and other business of which notice may have been given shall be transacted.

XII. Every member shall pay a subscription of not less than Rs. 3 per year to meet the ordinary expenses of the Society. The Council may exempt any member from payment of this subscription.

XIII. No proceedings at any meeting shall be invalid owing to the Council or the Committee not containing the full number of members at the time.

XIV. On the recommendation of the Council, the Brahma Somaj Committee shall have power to alter, omit, or add to these rules at a special meeting by a vote of not less than three-fifths of the members present at the meeting.

### III.

#### WORK DONE.

*February, 1896—February, 1905.*

The work done by the Committee during this period falls mainly under four heads, *viz.* :—

I. Receiving and giving assistance to the work of Unitarian Missionaries in India.

II. Electing candidates for the Manchester College Scholarship.

III. Organizing Reception meetings and lectures on theistic subjects.

IV. Administering certain Relief Funds raised mainly by contributions from our English Unitarian friends.

## (I)

## UNITARIAN MISSIONARIES IN INDIA.

1. Mr. J. T. Sunderland.—The visit of Mr. Sunderland (January, 1896) will be remembered as being the occasion of re-opening a more intimate and practical intercourse between the Brahmo Somaj and the Unitarian Body in England than had existed for some time in the past, to the success of which his own attractive personality, and warm-hearted and sympathetic appeals contributed in no small measure. He practically gave the start to the Brahmo Somaj Committee. His appeals on behalf of the poor famine stricken people of India made through the *Inquirer* and the *Christian Life* led to the starting (in 1900) of the Indian Famine Relief Fund raised by our English Unitarian friends and placed at the disposal of the Brahmo Somaj Committee. Recently, it is at his suggestion that the President of the Meadville Theological School has offered a scholarship to be held by an Indian student on terms similar to those of the Manchester College scholarship.

2. Rev. James Harwood.—Mr. Harwood came out to India in January, 1897. He entered into cordial relations with the members of all the sections of the Somaj, and gave lectures on a variety of subjects in the mandir and prayer hall of the Samajes as well as at other public places.

3. Rev. S. Fletcher Williams.—At the reception meeting held in the City College hall in January, 1899, the Brahmo Community "accorded their warmest welcome to Mr. F. Williams, and expressed their sincerest appreciation of the spirit of brotherly love and self-sacrifice that had moved him to devote his life to three years of mission work in connection with the movement of advanced religious thought in India." At a meeting held at the Albert Hall

on the 10th December, 1901, the Brahmo Somaj Committee "expressed its deepest sorrow at the intelligence of the death in England of Mr. F. Williams, and offered its heartfelt condolence to the members of his family." The interval was filled by Mr. Williams with work that made a very deep impression upon the cultured classes both inside and outside the Brahmo Somaj. He gave lectures on literary, theological, and religious subjects at various places all over India. He was present at several meetings of the Brahmo Somaj Committee, presided over some, and gave his valuable assistance particularly in the administration of the Famine Relief Fund. His weekly theistic services held in the Albert Hall, under arrangements made by a special committee with Dr. P. K. Ray as Secretary, appointed by the Brahmo Somaj Committee were very highly appreciated. The Brahmo Somaj Committee acting in union with the Theistic Services Committee presented him a farewell address at the Hotel Continental, with certain presents for himself and his daughter, on the 28th April, 1901. A Sub-Committee appointed by the Brahmo Somaj Committee acted in union with a larger Memorial Committee constituted after the death of Mr. Williams, and out of the funds raised by this Committee, an oleograph portrait of Mr. Williams was put up in the Albert Hall, and another in the hall of the Calcutta University Institute, the balance of the fund being reserved for the publication of the lectures and sermons of Mr. Williams delivered in India.

## (II)

### MANCHESTER COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP.

#### **Manchester College Scholarship.**

Manchester College Scholarship. The object and condition of the scholarship are fully stated in the

subjoined prospectus issued by the British and Foreign Unitarian Association:—Scholarships to enable Indian Students to study at Manchester College, Oxford.

The Committee of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association offer a Scholarship of £100 a year to a suitable candidate of ability, high character, and religious earnestness, to enable him to study Theology and Philosophy at Manchester College, Oxford, for two years, subject to the consent in each case of the College.

#### NOTES.

(1) The Scholarship of £ 100 a year should, with care, prove sufficient for the payment of all expenses of education and living while in England. It will, however, be seen that the student, or his friends, must find money to pay his passage to and from England.

(2) The continuance of the Scholarship will depend on the Committee receiving from the Principal of Manchester College, Oxford, a half-yearly report that the student is diligent in his studies, and preserves an unblemished character.

(3) The student must distinctly understand that the Committee of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association undertake no responsibility for finding him ministerial or missionary employment, or support, on the completion of his studies. The Committee are not finding, by this scholarship, a Mission to India ; they are simply desirous of helping men who are anxious to give their lives to religious work among their countrymen to become better fitted for that work.

*Information to be given by any candidate in India applying for this Scholarship.*

1. Name.....
2. Address.....
3. Age last birthday.....
4. Are you married?.....If so, what family?.....  
Are full arrangements made for their support during  
your period of study?.....
5. Where were you educated?.....
6. During what years?
7. Have you graduated, and if so, what University degree  
do you hold?.....
8. Give the name and location of the  
Brahmo Somaj or other religious  
organisation with which you are  
connected } .....
9. Is it your desire and purpose to  
devote yourself to religious work  
in India, in connection with  
some branch of the Brahmo  
Somaj, or other liberal religious  
movement? } .....

FORM OF APPLICATION TO BE MADE IN THE CANDIDATE'S  
OWN HANDWRITING.

I hereby make application to the Committee of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, London, for a Scholarship (value £100 a year) for the period of two years, to enable me to study at Manchester College, Oxford, in preparation for the ministry or for missionary work in India. It is understood that no theological or ecclesiastical tests shall be imposed upon me by the British and Foreign Unitarian Association.



If selected for the Scholarship, I can arrange to be in England by October....., 189 .

(Signed).....

Date.....

#### FORM OF RECOMMENDATION.

We, the undersigned, do hereby testify that we have made due and proper investigations regarding the moral and religious character, the ability, and the intellectual training of.....  
for a scholarship to enable him to study at Manchester College, Oxford ; and being satisfied that he is a fit person to study for the ministry or for missionary work in India, and to receive the advantages of the scholarship mentioned, we do hereby recommend that his application for the said scholarship be granted.

Signatures

*Extract from the Regulations of*

MANCHESTER COLLEGE, OXFORD.

MANCHESTER COLLEGE, OXFORD.

*[For the information of Indian Students, who will be  
subject to the College Regulations affecting  
Special Students ]*

The College exists for the purpose of promoting the study of Religion, Theology, and Philosophy, without insisting upon the adoption of particular doctrines.

#### REGULATIONS AFFECTING SPECIAL STUDENTS.

1. Those who wish to become Special Students must apply to the Committee for admission, present satisfactory testimonials as to their character and attainments, and

express their willingness to conform to the regulations of the College.

2. They are admitted without fees.

3. They are at liberty, under the advice and with the approval of the Principal, to select the classes which they wish to attend.

4. They have access to the Library and the Junior Common Room, and, in general, enjoy all the privileges of the College.

5. They are expected (unless some reason deemed valid by the Principal can be alleged) to be present at the Morning Religious Service and the Meetings of the Discussion Society, and to attend regularly and punctually the class to which they attach themselves. They must also attend the usual Examinations in their subjects of study.

6. A Special Student, who has passed satisfactorily through not less than one academical year's study, shall receive from the College a Certificate to that effect.

#### SUBJECTS OF STUDY.

1. *Philosophy*: Mental, Moral, Social, and Religious.
2. *Comparative Religion*: History of Ethnic and Universal Religions; History of Specific Religious Ideas
3. *The Bible*: Literary History and Criticism of the Old and the New Testament.
4. *The Christian Church*: History of particular period; History of Doctrine.
5. *The Practical Work of the Ministry*.

NOTE.—Special Students also have opportunities of attending Lectures at the University of Oxford.

In August, 1900, the Brahmo Somaj Committee, on the proposal of the late Rev. S. F. Williams, made the following recommendation to the Committee of the British

and Foreign Unitarian Association with regard to the Scholarship :

"That the Manchester College scholar should be elected every second year instead of annually, and that the £100 thus relieved should be paid over to the Calcutta Committee for them to spend in engaging the services of returned scholars, and of well-qualified and efficient men for the propagation of Brahmoism in India."

But in a letter dated October 22, 1900, the Secretary, British and Foreign Unitarian Association, wrote to say that: "The Committee gave their very careful and sympathetic consideration to the proposal, but they found it was not possible for them to adopt the recommendation, as it was contrary to the provisions of the scheme adopted when the appeal for funds for work in India was made in England."

In 1904, however, an offer was made by the British and Foreign Unitarian Association of "£100 a year (a similar amount being raised in India) for a course of lectures by able and prominent men representing the best that the Brahmo Somaj had to offer to the people of India." The Brahmo Somaj Committee, however, has not yet been able to arrive at a decision with regard to this offer.

In 1899, on the recommendation of the Brahmo Somaj Committee, the British and Foreign Unitarian Association adopted the following modification of the conditions under which the Manchester College scholarship is held.

"As in the present state of the organization of the Brahmo Somaj, it is impossible for the Manchester College scholars, on their return to their native country, to maintain themselves by working as ministers or as missionaries, they should be allowed to do any paying work which is not incompatible with the main object of the scholarship. Subject to this condition, they might be allowed, for

instance, to edit periodicals, to write books, to take pupils, to devote a portion of their working hours to teaching in schools and colleges, to give general lectures to the public and to special societies, to be in charge of such institutions as the Library, the Boys' or the Girls' Boarding Schools, the Mission Press and Publication, Theological Schools and Colleges connected with the Brahmo Somaj. The candidate for the scholarship must however, present with his application at least two independent certificates each of which should be signed by one well-known person of the Brahmo Somaj that he intends to devote himself primarily to religious work."

At a meeting held on September 26th, 1899, the Brahmo Somaj Committee also adopted the following resolution with regard to the scholarship:—

That in future applications for the Manchester College Scholarship be advertised for early in January in each year, and be requested to be sent in by the 1st of March. It is hereby notified that any application received later than the 1st March cannot be considered.

#### LIST OF MANCHESTER COLLEGE SCHOLARS :

- 1 1896—Babu Promotho Loll Sen  
(Calcutta)
2. 1898—Babu Bipin Chunder Pal  
(Calcutta)
- 3 1898—Babu Hem Chunder Sarkar  
(Calcutta)
4. 1900—Mr. Moti Bulasa  
(Poona)  
(Died at Port Said on his way to Engand).
5. 1901—Mr. Vithal Ramji Shinde  
(Poona)

6. 1903—Mr. Vasudev Anant Sukhtankar  
(Poona)\*

### (III)

#### RECEPTION MEETINGS AND LECTURES.

The following public meetings were held under the auspices of the Brahmo Somaj Committee during the period under review:—

1. Meeting at the Albert Hall, September, 1898, to give a reception to Mr. A. M. Bose "on his return home after doing excellent work in England to further the interests of the Brahmo Somaj."

2. Meeting in the rooms of the Brahmo Somaj Library, December 12th, 1898, to give a reception to Principal Fairbairn of Mansfield College, Oxford, who had come out to India to deliver the second course of lectures on the Haskell Foundation (Barrows Lectureship).

3. Meeting at the Albert Hall, August 18th, 1898, Lecture by Rev. P. C. Mozoomdar on "The Progress of the Brahmo Somaj."

4. Meeting at the Albert Hall, December 13th, 1898, Lecture by Babu Dwijendra Nath Tagore, on "The mutual action and re-action of the Indo-Aryan and Buddhistic religions and their results."

5. Meeting at the City College Hall, January, 1899, for according a welcome to Rev. S. Fletcher Williams, representative of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association.

#### RELIEF FUNDS.

1. RELIEF OF POOR BRAHMO FAMILIES.—In August, 1897, the Brahmo Somaj Committee received from the Rev.

W. C. Bowie the sum of £93 (Rs. 1,454 and odd) raised by the Unitarian Association in England for the purpose of giving relief to those members and friends of the Brahmo Somaj who might be suffering from the effects of the famine (then raging).

On receipt of this sum, the Committee resolved "that this generous gift of our Unitarian friends in England be accepted with deep thankfulness, and, considering the amount of personal knowledge and delicacy that will be necessary in distributing the money, the actual work of distribution be entrusted into the hands of one chosen representative from each Somaj, with a request to each that he will have the kindness to distribute the money amongst members of his own section or of the Brahmo Somaj generally, as he thinks fit using his own discretion in the matter." The money was accordingly placed in the hands of, and distributed by Mr. S. N. Tagore, Mr. P. C. Mozoomdar, and Pundit Sivanath Sastri.

2. THE EARTHQUAKE RELIEF FUND.—In 1898, the British and Foreign Unitarian Association sent through Mr. A. M. Bose, who had been to England, and also in subsequent instalments, a sum of money amounting in all to Rs. 2,390—annas 4, for the repair of the Brahmo Somaj buildings which had been damaged by the calamitous earthquake of the previous year. The Brahmo Somaj Committee decided to distribute this amount only amongst those Somajes, damaged by the earthquake, which had a properly registered Trust Deed. Brahmo Somajes at the following places accordingly received help out of this Fund: Murshidabad, Baranagore, Darjeeling, Moukhar, Cheera-poonjee, Dhubri, Mymensingh, Rampore Boalia, Shillong, Shella, Dinajpur, Ramporehat, Chundernagore, Kumarkhali, Rungpore, Behala, Konnagore.

The following is a statement of the amount of help received by each of the Somajes.

### Accounts of the Earthquake Relief Fund.

RECEIPTS	Rs.	As.	P.	DISBURSEMENTS.	Rs.	As.	P.
Received from the British and Foreign Unitarian Associa- tion. ...	2,390	4	0	Amount of grant to Brahmo Somajes at			
				1. Murshidabad ...	100	0	0
				2. Baranagore ...	50	0	0
				3. Darjeeling ...	50	0	0
				4. Moukhar ...	100	0	0
				5. Cheerapoonjee ...	100	0	0
				6. Dhubri ...	39	0	0
				7. Mymensingh, N. D. Church ...	200	0	0
				8. Mymensingh, S. B. Somaj ...	448	15	0
				9. Rampore Boalla ...	200	0	0
				10. Shillong ...	450	0	0
				11. Shella ...	150	0	0
				12. Dinajpur ...	150	0	0
				13. Ramporehat ...	100	0	0
				14. Chundernagore ...	32	0	0
				15. Kumarkhali ...	15	0	0
				16. Rungpore ...	100	0	0
				17. Behala ...	50	0	0
				18. Konnagar ...	50	0	0
				Insurance Commission	5	5	0
Total Rs. ...	2,390	4	0	Total Rs. ...	2,390	4	0

B. N. SEN,  
Secy., B. S. Committee.

3. FAMINE RELIEF FUND :—The following is a report of the famine relief operations carried on during the years 1900—1903, under the supervision of the Brahmo Somaj Committee, with the money generously contributed by our Unitarian friends in England, supplemented by a small amount raised in India. This report was drawn up by the Secretary in consultation with Mr. A. M. Bose, and forwarded to Mr. Ion Pritchard, President of the Indian Sub-Committee of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association.

*Report of Famine Relief operations carried on under the supervision of the Brahmo Somaj Committee.*

(1900—1903)

*Calcutta, the 26th March, 1903.*

FROM

THE SECRETARY, BRAHMO SOMAJ COMMITTEE.

TO

THE PRESIDENT, INDIAN SUB-COMMITTEE, B. & F. U.  
ASSOCIATION.

DEAR SIR,

I have the honour, under instructions from the Brahmo Somaj Committee, to forward to you herewith an abstract account of the receipts and disbursements in connection with the Famine Relief operations carried on under the supervision of the Brahmo Somaj Committee with the money so generously contributed from England, and sent by you in instalments to the Hon'ble Mr. A. M. Bose, supplemented by a small fund raised here in India.

The money sent by you, in various instalments, amounts to a total of Rs. 38,487-13-2. It was sent at a time (1900) when the sufferings from famine affected



millions of people in vast tracts of country, and were of a most distressing character. This most generous and timely help will live in the memory of our people as a most gratifying indication of the deep, philanthropic interest taken by the Unitarian Community of England in the welfare of the Indian masses. The mission tours of the Rev. J. T. Sunderland, Rev. James Harwood, and the late lamented Rev. S. F. Williams, particularly of the last, made an appeal to the cultured sections of our people ; the Manchester College Scholarship is giving us, year by year, workers with a high degree of intellectual attainments and efficiency to spread reformed ideas and a purified doctrine of faith ; and this liberal contribution in aid of famine relief operations has given us to feel that the love of Jesus for suffering humanity is still at work in the body of English Unitarians, and has given us, Indian Theists, an opportunity for realising a little of that love, by working, and carrying relief amongst the suffering, starving, dying millions of our native land.

In noticing the accounts you will observe that we made it a point, as was no doubt intended by your Association, to carry on our operations purely through theistic agencies, and with the help of theistic workers in different parts of the country. Government had opened relief-works, and was also giving gratuitous relief on a vast scale for the mitigation of the distress ; and though naturally in many cases our methods of relief were modelled upon those of Government, yet the agencies and workers were in every case taken out of our own body. The distress was severest in the Central Provinces, Rajputana, and the Bombay Presidency, and we accordingly selected certain places in these localities to be the centres of our work.

We spent most at Khandwa and Mortakka, *viz.*, Rs. 11,930, this being the spot specially chosen by the

Brahmo Somaj Committee, as being just on the borders of the Central Provinces and Rajputana. The Committee deputed its own workers, coming from the different sections of the Brahmo Somaj, who most cheerfully volunteered their services, without any remuneration, to the spot, and who made arrangements for, and personally supervised the feeding of about a thousand people daily, from the end of April to the end of July 1900, and also distributed clothes, medicine, regular money help amongst several thousands of starving families, and had also, in several cases, to make arrangements for disposing of dead bodies. Babu Brajagopal Neogi, a Missionary of the Somaj, and Babus Indubhusan Roy, Lalit Mohan Das, Sudhir Kumar Banerjee, Haralal Roy, Kashi Charan Gupta and Akhoy Kumar Lodh were the principal workers, all belonging to the Brahmo Somaj.

At Ahmedabad,—where we spent Rs. 7,000,—there is a Prarthana Somaj in a very flourishing condition, with a very energetic Secretary in Mr. Ramambhai Mohipatram Nilkanth. This Prarthana Somaj was already carrying on certain relief operations when in August, 1900, Babu Brajogopal Neogi proceeded to Ahmedabad from Mortakka and extended these operations in co-operation with the Somaj. The money sent by the B. S. Committee materially helped the work which was widely and warmly appreciated. There was, and I believe still is, an orphanage in Ahmedabad, opened and maintained mainly by local liberality, most of the inmates of which were taken from amongst the victims of the famine. The work of this orphanage also was materially assisted out of the funds supplied by our committee.

The Prarthana Somaj of Bombay, under the able and distinguished presidency of the late Mr. Justice M. G.

Ranade, was also doing its best to give relief to the people in distress in that presidency. We sent Rs. 2,600 to Mr. Ranade to assist in this work. Here also there was a local orphanage, recruited out of the famine, which received considerable assistance out of this fund.

The distress was not quite so pressing in the Punjab, when our operations were commenced, though not altogether absent. Later on, in January, 1901, on a representation from Babu Abinash Chander Mozoomdar, Secretary of the local Brahmo Somaj, Rs. 500 was sent to Lahore for distribution among starving people, and in January, 1902, on an appeal from the same gentleman, a further amount of Rs. 50 was sent for purchasing blankets for the inmates of the local orphanage, recruited out of the famine.

The Sadharan Brahmo Somaj of Calcutta had collected Rs. 4,652 on its own account by public subscriptions and was carrying on relief operations in Rajputana by sending a number of workers of its own. Here also people were fed daily, blankets and medicines distributed and a local orphanage assisted out of the fund. On an appeal from the executive committee of the Somaj for a grant out of the funds of the Brahmo Somaj Committee to supplement this fund, Rs. 7,000 was granted in two instalments.

The aspect of things began to be a little favourable since 1901, after which there was no more any urgent call for any considerable amount out of the balance of the Fund still remaining in the hands of the Committee. In administering this trust the Brahmo Somaj Committee has throughout acted on the principle that it should be spent only for the relief of distress in its *severest* form. And since the crop-prospects in India are extremely variable, it

would be impossible at any moment to be assured that we had seen the worst, and the Committee felt itself justified in holding something in reserve, when the extreme forms of suffering coming within the scope of its operations had been mitigated, rather than spending the whole amount in relieving more tolerable forms of suffering. Up to the present moment, we have been spared a repetition of the frightful calamity which visited India in 1900, and the balance in the hands of the Committee is substantially what it was in 1901.

Only on two occasions since we have had to touch this balance. In September last year about two hundred villages in the neighbourhood of Ramporehat were absolutely swept away by a destructive flood, rendering thousands of people utterly homeless and destitute. The Committee granted Rs. 200 which was distributed in two or three of these villages. And only lately—(March, 1903)—on an appeal received from certain representative members of the Bankipur Brahmo Somaj, Rs. 200 has been granted for the relief of distress in several poor families in Bankipur—in those cases where the bread-winners of the family are being taken off by the plague at present virulently raging there.

In conclusion, I have to request that you will be kind enough to communicate to your Committee, to the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, and to all those that have so generously subscribed to this fund, the sincerest gratitude of the Brahmo Somaj Committee, or the whole Brahmo Somaj, and of all theistic bodies in India, mingled with the unexpressed but not the less real or deep feelings of thankfulness, of the thousands of helpless people all over the country who have been saved from the jaws of death by this free, unasked gift of love from their unknown

friends across the sea. May this strengthen the bond, that, inspite of differences of race, colour and other circumstances, does bind together and shall ever bind together the people of India and England as children of the same Father, Which is in Heaven.

In the love and fellowship of a common faith,

I remain,

Yours faithfully,

BENOYENDRA NATH SEN,

*Secretary, Brahmo Somaj Committee.*

*The 26th March, 1903.*

CALCUTTA,

Abstract Account of Famine Relief Operations carried on under the supervision of the Brahmo Somaj Committee 1900—1903 :—

RECEIPTS.				DISBURSEMENTS			
	Rs.	As.	P.		Rs.	As.	P.
Remittances from England	38,487	13	2	Relief Operations in—			
Subscriptions collected				(1) Khandwa and Mor-			
in Calcutta	...	1,225	9 0	takka	...	11,830	0 0
				(2) Ahmedabad	...	7,000	0 0
				(3) Bombay	...	2,600	0 0
				(4) Lahore	...	550	0 0
				(5) Ramporehat	...	200	0 0
				(6) Bankipore	...	200	0 0
				(7) Rajputana	...	7,000	0 0
				Railway fares, etc.,			
				of workers	...	304	4 9
				Medicines	...	40	4 0
				Telegraph, Postage,			
				etc.	...	33	10 6
				Balance	...	9,846	2 11
Total	...	39,713	6 2	Total	...	39,713	6 2

BENOYENDRA NATH SEN,

*Secretary, Brahmo Somaj Committee.*

At the time of forwarding the report, a reference was made as to the desire of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association with regard to the use to which the Balance should be put, it being asked whether it should be (1) returned to the Association, or (2) reserved exclusively for the relief of sufferers from famine in future, or (3) used for the mitigation of distress caused by famine as well as other calamities such as floods, plague, earthquake, etc. In reply to this Mr. Pritchard sent an intimation that "it was the desire of the British Committee that the Balance of the Fund should be reserved for the relief of sufferers from famine in future." The Balance has accordingly been invested in Government Securities of the value of Rupees ten thousand.

### **The Brahma-Vidyalyaya or Theological College for all India.**

The Brahma-Vidyalyaya or Theological College for all India :—It has been decided to start a Theological College in Calcutta under the above name from July, 1907. The nature of the Institution is fully set forth in the body of "Rules" given at the end. A few preliminary words of explanation, however, may be necessary to introduce the whole thing to the public.

*The Name* :—The name is associated with the sacred memory of Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore and Brahma-*nanda Keshub Chunder Sen*. The *Brahma-Vidyalyaya* was first started by them for giving theological instructions, and in those days, it was the means of leading many a youth to a knowledge of the Truth, and to a life in God, and to the service of God and the preaching of the Truth. May the revived *Brahma-Vidyalyaya* work in the spirit of its founders, and strive to keep the Lamp of Divine Knowledge burning from generation to generation.

*Its aims and methods:*—The object of the *Brahma-Vidyālaya* is to foster the striving of the soul after God in a spirit of perfect spiritual freedom. In other words, it is the study of Theology on a thoroughly unsectarian basis,—together with such discipline of life, and training for practical work as the circumstances may permit. It shall encourage the study, in a spirit of genuine and earnest scholarship, of theological systems, the history of the development of religious doctrines and churches, and the lives of great men and saints, as the surest means of enriching thought and life, but it shall never forget that

“They (these systems &c.) are but broken lights  
from Thee,

And Thou, O Lord, art more than they.”

Pure *Brahma-Vidya*, or Theology in the sense of an unfettered search for the Eternal, shall be the standpoint as well as basis of all its studies.

The Institution shall also endeavour to train practical workers—men fit to be preachers, or teachers of youth, or literary workers, or social and philanthropic workers in other ways. It offers scholarships to help students to adopt such courses of study, and it offers stipends to help approved workers to carry on their work should they require such help. It is needless to add that it looks upon self-consecration as the primary condition of all sanctified work, and also that it shall in no way interfere with any of its scholars taking up any special spiritual discipline or vow of self-sacrifice that may be demanded by the ideal of missionary life that commends itself to him.

*The Management:*—The management of the Institution has been undertaken by a Council consisting at present of the following gentlemen:—Pandit S. N. Sastri, Dr. P. K. Ray, Babu Umesh Chandra Datta, Pandit

Sitanath Tattwabhusan, Babu Heramba Chandra Maitra, Hon'ble Babu Jogendra Chandra Ghosh, Babu Brojendra Nath Seal, Justice Mr. N. G. Chandavarkar, Mr. R. Venkatratnam Naidu, Prof. Ruchiram Sahni, Mr. Lalshanker Umiayasankar, H. H. the Maharajadhiraj of Burdwan—President, Dr. R. G. Bhandarkar—Vice-President, Mr. Satyendra Nath Tagore—Secretary, Prof. Benoyendra Nath Sen—Joint Secretary, Babu Hem Chandra Sarkar—Assistant Secretary.

An Association also is going to be formed, in accordance with the rules, for helping to promote the objects of the Institution. As soon as hundred members will have been enlisted they will elect from among themselves fifteen members to represent them in the Council.

His Highness the Maharajadhiraj of Burdwan has made a grant of Rs. 300 a month towards the expenses of the Institution, and has been thankfully accepted by the Council as the first Patron of the Institution.

*The Start:*—The Institution will be started in July next. A house (199, Cornwallis Street) has been engaged for the purpose at a rental of Rs. 90 per month. The regular students will be accommodated there under the supervision of a resident Superintendent and some of the Professors. The courses of Lectures and Instruction for the First Year will be announced as early as possible. The following gentlemen have been requested to form the staff of Professors and Lecturers.—Dr. P. K. Ray—Principal, Babu Brojendra Nath Seal (to join after one year) Pandit S. N. Sastri, Prof. Benoyendra Nath Sen, Pandit Sitanath Tattwabhusan, Mr. A. C. Sen, Mr. Dhammananda Kosombi, Mr. T. L. Vaswani, Mr. S. N. Tagore, Babu Hem Chandra Sarkar.

*Library*—It is in the contemplation of the Council to collect a comprehensive up-to-date Theological Library,



such as will serve the purposes of all theological students. Special donations for the Library will be invited, and provision will be made for a regular annual grant from the general funds of the College. The nucleus of the Library will be formed with some of the existing theological Libraries in Calcutta. His Highness the Maharaja-dhiraj of Burdwan has made a first donation of Rs. 500 for the Library and has very kindly offered to make over a number of theological books from his own Library.

It will be seen from the above that what is contemplated is a Theological Institution in a large scale and on a broad universal basis, which in the providence of God may in time take its place among the greatest centres of theological study in the world, and may be a worthy exponent of the highest religious thought and ideal of India. That consummation can be attained only by the devout, earnest and persevering efforts of many generations of consecrated labourers. In the meanwhile we earnestly appeal to all who are interested in the advance of theological study in the spirit of perfect liberty and profound reverence to lend to the Institution the most strenuous help that they are capable of. A minimum income of Rs. 600 a month is necessary to start with. Of this subscriptions to the amount Rs. 350 a month have already been secured. We earnestly hope that all theists and theistic organisations will liberally contribute to the funds of the Brahma-Vidyalaya.

BIJAYA CHAND MAHATAB—*President.*

SATYENDRA NATH TAGORE—*Secretary.*

BENOYENDRA NATH SEN—*Joint Secretary.*

HEM CHANDRA SARKAR—*Asst. Secretary.*

### **The Rules of the Brahma-Vidyalyaya or Theological College for all India.**

1. The name of the Institution shall be the Brahma-Vidyalyaya or the Theological College for all India.

2. The object of the Institution shall be to impart liberal theological instruction according to the principles of pure theism and to train preachers and missionaries with a view to the vigorous propagation of theism in India and elsewhere.

3. The Institution will have a competent and devoted staff of teachers, a well-stocked theological library, a house of its own and other accessories.

4. The Institution will offer scholarships, during the period of their training, to young men of approved character and ability who are willing to propagate theism and fellowships, which might be made tenable through life, to those students who will pass the final examination with distinction and devote themselves to theistic work, provided the holders continue to give satisfaction in their work.

5. A preliminary entrance examination will be held at the beginning of every session, on the result of which candidates for scholarships for the first year class will be selected. The selection of candidates for scholarships for the Second and Third year classes will be made on the result of the annual examinations at the end of the first and second year's course. There shall be a final public examination at the end of the third year and certificates and diplomas will be given to successful students.

6. A certain number of fellowships shall be given to such graduates of the College who will devote their lives to the sole work of preaching pure theism.

7. Nothing in these rules will stand in the way of the holders of fellowships working under any of the existing recognised theistic bodies.

8. There will be an Association for promoting the objects of the Institution. Any person in sympathy with the objects of the Institution may be elected a member of the Association on payment of an annual subscription, the amount of which will be fixed by the Council of the College. Samajes, Associations, congregations, &c., paying an annual subscription, the amount of which will be fixed by the Council, shall have the right to nominate one member each, such nomination being subject to the approval of the Council.

9. The government of the College will be vested in a Council consisting of thirty members, besides Office-bearers, of whom fifteen will be permanent members and fifteen elected by the Association every two years. Any vacancies occurring amongst the permanent members of the Council will be filled by the Council, the life-members and the patrons. In the same way if any vacancies occur amongst the 15 members of the Council elected by the Association they will be filled up by the members themselves.

10. As soon as hundred members will have been enrolled, they will elect fifteen members of the Council from among themselves who will hold the office till the first biennial meeting, when and at every subsequent biennial meeting fresh elections to fill up vacancies will take place.

11. The Association will have a President, one or more Vice-Presidents, one Secretary, one Joint Secretary, one or more Assistant Secretaries, who will be the Office-bearers of the Council as well. All the Office-bearers will be *ex-officio* members of the Council.

12. Persons, in sympathy with the objects of the Institution may become a Patron on payment of a donation of Rs. 20,000 or more, or a monthly subscription of Rs. 100, or more subject to the approval of the Council.

13. Subject to similar approval persons in sympathy with the objects of the Institution will become its Life-member on payment of a donation of Rs. 1,000 or more.

14. Patrons will have the privilege of recommending a student for one of the scholarships offered by the College.

### **Theistic Mission Society.**

1. The name of the Society shall be the Theistic Mission Society.

2. The object of the Society would be to train and support preachers and Missionaries for the propagation of theism.

3. The Society shall work in co-operation with the Theological College for all India and shall offer scholarships, during the period of their training, to young men of approved character and ability who are willing to propagate theism and fellowships, which might be made tenable through life, to those students who will pass the final examination with distinction and devote themselves to theistic work, provided the holders continue to give satisfaction in their work.

4. The Society shall hold a preliminary examination at the beginning of every session of the Theological College and shall grant scholarships to certain students who are willing to propagate theism. On the result of the preliminary entrance examination, candidates for scholarships for the First Year Class will be selected. The selection of candidates for scholarships for the Second and Third year classes will be made on the result of the annual examinations at the end of the first and second year's.

course. There shall be a final public examination at the end of the third year and certificates and diplomas will be given to successful students.

5. A certain number of fellowships shall be given to such graduates of the Theological College who will devote their lives to the sole work of preaching pure theism.

6. Any person in sympathy with the objects of the Society may be elected a member of the Association on payment of an annual minimum subscription of Rs. 5.

7. There shall be a body of Governors who will be the executive of the Society with final powers for carrying on its work. It shall consist of twenty members.

8. The Government of the Society will be vested in a Council consisting of twenty members, besides office-bearers, of whom there will be ten permanent members and ten elected by the Society every two years. Any vacancies occurring amongst the permanent members of the Council will be filled by the Council, the life-members, and patrons. In the same way if any vacancies occur amongst the ten members of the Council elected by the Society, they will be filled up by the members themselves.

9. As soon as fifty members will have been enrolled, they will elect ten members of the Council from among themselves who will hold the office till the first biennial meeting, when and at every subsequent biennial meeting fresh elections to fill up vacancies will take place.

10. The Society will have a President, one or more Vice-Presidents, one Secretary, one Joint Secretary, one or more Assistant Secretaries, who will be the office-bearers of the Council as well. All the office-bearers will be *ex-officio* members of the Council.

11. Persons, in sympathy with the objects of the Institution, may become a Patron on payment of a dona-

tion of Rs. 10,000 or more, or a monthly subscription of Rs. 50, or more, subject to the approval of the Council.

12. Subject to similar approval persons in sympathy with the objects of the Institution will become its Life-members on payment of a donation of Rs. 1,000 or more.

13. Patrons will have the privilege of recommending a student for one of the scholarships offered by the College.

### **The Brahmo Somaj of India.**

It was only at a General Conference of believers in the New Dispensation held in the Bharatbarsiya Brahma Mandir, on the 25th August, 1906, that a resolution was adopted re-organizing the constitution of the Church of the New Dispensation. The same resolution declared "the unbroken continuity in organization and spirit of the Church of the New Dispensation with the Brahmo Somaj of India founded in 1866." Since the adoption of this resolution, no actual work has ever been started under the re-organized constitution. In the absence of any such work to record, it is only a sort of general report, or rather a very rough outline of the history of the *constitution* of the Brahmo Somaj of India, that it will be possible for the Secretary to present at this meeting.

I must at the outset express my very deep obligation to Rev. Upadhyaya Gour Govinda Roy for the invaluable help I have received in this matter from old files of the Dharmatattva, and his Life of Minister Keshub Chunder. His views are not always mine own,—but he has himself, I believe, outgrown many of his own views,—but for the services rendered by him, from a historical and constitutional point of view, by the invaluable records he has preserved, and by his steady and thoughtful, though perhaps sometimes misconceived, regard for the constitution and treatment of constitutional questions, in which

respect he is, I believe, unique and almost singular amongst our missionaries,—our community cannot be too thankful.

BENOYENDRA NATH SEN,

Jan. 29, 1907.

### BEGINNINGS OF THE BRAHMO SOMAJ OF INDIA.

The Brahmo Somaj of India was first constituted when the liberal and progressive section of Brahmos separated from the Calcutta or Adi Brahmo Somaj in 1866. Its original simple constitution is embodied in the following resolutions adopted, amongst others, on the proposal of Keshub Chunder Sen, supported by Aghore Nath Gupta and others,—at a General Conference held on the 11th November, 1866 (*Vide*—Life of the Minister, by Upadhyaya Gour Govind Roy, pp. 88—92).

যাঁহারা ব্রাহ্মধর্মের বিশ্বাস করেন, তাঁহাদের নিজ মঙ্গলসাধন এবং ব্রহ্মজ্ঞান ও ব্রহ্মোপাসনা প্রচারোদ্দেশে তাঁহারা “ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজ” নামে সমাজবদ্ধ হউন।

যে সকল নরনারী ব্রাহ্মধর্মের মূলসত্যে বিশ্বাস করিবেন, তাঁহারা ই ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্মসমাজের সভ্যশ্রেণীভুক্ত হইতে পারিবেন।

আমরা কোন নূতন ব্যাপার করিতে যাইতেছি না, ব্রাহ্মসমাজে যে সকল উপাদান আছে তাহার আকার দান করাই আমাদের উদ্দেশ্য। বর্তমান সময়ে দেশের চারিদিকে সেই একমাত্র মঙ্গলময়ের পূজা করিবার জন্ত বহুসংখ্যক সমাজ প্রতিষ্ঠিত হইয়াছে, এবং শত শত লোক এই ধর্মের আশ্রয় গ্রহণ করিতেছে। তন্মিহ্ন আমাদের প্রচারক মহাশয়েরা ব্রাহ্মধর্ম প্রচারের জন্ত দেশ বিদেশে ভ্রমণ করিতেছেন, এবং সময়ে সময়ে পুস্তক পুস্তিকা সকল প্রকাশিত হইতেছে,—এই সমস্ত সমাজ, উপাসক এবং প্রচারকগণকে এক সূত্রে বদ্ধ করিয়া তাঁহাদের কার্যকলাপ যাহাতে পরস্পরের হিত এবং একতা সাধন

করে তজ্জন্ত উহাদিগকে প্রণালীবদ্ধ করাই অষ্টকার সভার প্রধান প্রয়োজন।

The idea was thus explained by Keshub Chunder Sen in the speech with which he introduced the resolution :

The significance of this step taken will become clear by taking a simple glance at the condition of the Brahmo Somaj as an organized body,—before the Brahmo Somaj of India was constituted.

The Trust Deed of the Brahmo Somaj as drawn up by Raja Rammohun Roy simply provided “for a place of public meeting of all sorts and descriptions of people without distinction as shall behave and conduct themselves in an orderly, sober, religious and devout manner for the worship and adoration of the Eternal Unsearchable and Immutable Being, &c., &c.”

(*Vide*—Works of Raja Rammohun Roy—p. 216).

Maharshi Debendra Nath Tagore also thus writes in his autobiography :

ব্রাহ্মসমাজ যখন আমি প্রথম দেখিতে যাই, তখন দেখিলাম যে, একটি নিভৃত গৃহে শূদ্রের অসাক্ষাতে বেদ পাঠ হইত। যখন ব্রাহ্মসমাজের উদ্দেশ্য এই যে সকলের নিকটেই ব্রহ্মোপাসনা প্রচার করা, যখন ট্রষ্টভীভেতে আছে যে, সকল জাতিই নির্বিশেষে একত্র হইয়া ব্রহ্মোপাসনা করিতে পারিবে, তখন কার্যে ইহার বিপরীত দেখিয়া আমার মনে বড় আঘাত লাগিল। আবার একদিন দেখি যে, সেই ব্রাহ্মসমাজের বেদী হইতে রামচন্দ্র বিদ্যাবাগীশের সহযোগী ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র কায়রত্ন অযোধ্যাপতি রামচন্দ্রের অবতার হওয়ার বিষয় প্রতিপন্ন করিতেছেন। ইহা আমার অতিশয় অসঙ্গত ও ব্রাহ্মধর্ম বিরুদ্ধ বোধ হইল। আমি ইহার প্রতিবিধান করিবার জন্য প্রকাশে বেদ পাঠের ব্যবস্থা করিয়া দিলাম, এবং বেদী হইতে অবতারবাদের বর্ণনা নিবারণ করিলাম। (*vide* Autobiography P. 34 ).

Again :—একদিন যন্ত্রাণ্ডে বসিয়া বসিয়া ভাবিতেছি যে ব্রাহ্মসমাজের কেহ কোন একটা ধর্মভাবে বদ্ধ নাই। সমাজে জোয়ার



ভাটার জ্বায় কত লোক আসিতেছে, চলিয়া যাইতেছে, কিন্তু কেহই এক ধর্ম্মমূর্ত্তে গ্রথিত নাই। অতএব যখন সমাজে লোকের সমাগম বৃদ্ধি হইতে লাগিল, তখন মনে হইল, যে লোক বাছা আবশ্যক। কেহ বা যথার্থ উপাসনার জন্ত আগমন করে, কেহ বা লক্ষ্য শূন্য হইয়া আইসে—কাহাকে আমরা ব্রহ্মোপাসক বলিয়া গ্রহণ করিতে পারি? এই ভাবিয়া স্থির করিলাম, যাহারা পৌত্তলিকতা পরিত্যাগ করিয়া এক ঈশ্বরের উপাসনায় ব্রতী হইয়া প্রতিজ্ঞাবদ্ধ হইবেন, তাঁহারা ই ব্রাহ্ম হইবেন। যখন ব্রাহ্মসমাজ আছে, তখন তাহার প্রত্যেক সভ্যের ব্রাহ্ম হওয়া চাই। অনেকে হঠাৎ মনে করিতে পারেন যে ব্রাহ্মদল হইতে ব্রাহ্মসমাজ হইয়াছে, কিন্তু বাস্তবিক তাহা নহে। ব্রাহ্মসমাজ হইতে ব্রাহ্ম নাম স্থির হয়। কোন কার্য্যই বিধিপূর্ব্বক না করিলে তাহার কোন ফল হয় না। এই জন্ত ব্রাহ্মধর্ম্ম যাহাতে বিধিপূর্ব্বক গৃহীত হয়, যাহাতে পৌত্তলিকতার পরিবর্ত্তে ব্রহ্মোপাসনা প্রবর্ত্তিত হয়, আমি তাহার উদ্দেশ্যে ব্রাহ্মধর্ম্ম গ্রহণের একটি প্রতিজ্ঞা পত্র রচনা করিয়াছিলাম। (Maharshi's Autobiography p. 35).

#### DEFINITION AND EXTENSION OF THE SCOPE AND SPHERE OF ITS WORK.

The Brahmo Somaj of India was constituted in November, 1866. In October, 1867,—a meeting of the Brahmo Somaj of India was held, where amongst others, the following resolutions were adopted,—which further defined the scope and sphere of its work: (*Vide*—Minister's Life, pp. 166 and 171).

১। ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্মসমাজের সহিত ভারতবর্ষস্থ সকল ব্রাহ্মসমাজের যোগ স্থাপন জন্ত নিম্নলিখিত ছয়টি উপায় অবলম্বিত হয়। যথা—

১। ব্রাহ্মধর্ম্মের মূলসত্যসকল সম্বন্ধে একতা সংবর্দ্ধন।

২। স্থানীয় ব্রাহ্মসমাজসমূহের আধ্যাত্মিক উন্নতির জন্ত প্রচারক মহাশয়গণের উক্ত স্থানে গমন।

৩। সকল ব্রাহ্মসমাজে একটা সাধারণ উপাসনা প্রণালী প্রচলিত করণ।

৪। ব্রাহ্মধর্মসম্বন্ধীয় কোন গ্রন্থ প্রচার করণ বিষয়ে কোন সমাজ ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্মসমাজের সাহায্য প্রার্থনা করিলে সাধ্যানুসারে অর্থানুকূল্য করণ।

৫। কোন ব্রাহ্ম বা ব্রাহ্মসমাজ ব্রাহ্মধর্মসম্বন্ধীয় কোন পুস্তকাদি প্রচারিত করিলে অনুগ্রহপূর্বক তাহার এক এক খণ্ড ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্মসমাজে প্রেরণ করেন।

৬। ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্মসমাজের কোন অধিবেশনে কোন গুরুতর প্রস্তাব মীমাংসা হইবার পূর্বে মফঃস্বলস্থ সভাগণ তাঁহাদের নিজ নিজ মত লিপিবদ্ধ করিয়া প্রেবণ করেন।

২। ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্মসমাজ প্রচারকগণের সাহায্যে ব্রাহ্মধর্ম প্রচার করিবেন। প্রচারকগণ যেমন বিশুদ্ধ নিঃস্বার্থভাবে এবং কোন ব্যক্তি বা সমাজের সাহায্যাপেক্ষা না করিয়া প্রচারক্ষেত্রে প্রবেশ করিয়াছেন, সমাজ তাঁহাদের সহিত তদনুযায়ী ব্যবহার করিবেন। যদিও তাঁহারা জীবিকানির্ব্বাহের জন্ত এই সমাজের উপর নির্ভর করেন না, কিন্তু কর্তব্যের আদেশে সমাজ সাধ্যমত তাঁহাদের সাহায্য করিবেন এবং তাঁহাদের ও তাঁহাদের পরিবারবর্গের জীবনোপায় বিধান করিতে চেষ্টা করিবেন, প্রচারকগণ তাঁহাদের কার্যের জন্ত কেবল ঈশ্বরের নিকট দায়ী।

৩। ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্মসমাজের বৈষয়িক কার্য নির্ব্বাহের ভার একজন সম্পাদক এবং একজন সহকারীর প্রতি অর্পিত হয়। আগামী বর্ষের জন্ত শ্রীযুক্ত কেশবচন্দ্র সেন সম্পাদক এবং শ্রীযুক্ত প্রতাপ চন্দ্র মজুমদার সহকারী সম্পাদক মনোনীত হন।

The next year, 1868, during the Maghotsava, the foundation stone of Bharatbarsiya Brahma Mandir was laid ; as will be seen from the following extract: (*Vide M's Life*, p. 185).

ভিত্তিস্থাপন :—ঈশ্বর প্রসাদে অদ্য ১১ই মাঘে, ১৭৮২ শকাব্দে, শুক্রবারে ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্মসমাজ সংক্রান্ত উপাসনা মন্দিরের ভিত্তি সংস্থাপিত হইল।

“By the Grace of God, to-day the 24th of January, 1868, Friday, is laid the foundation-stone of the house of worship of the Brahmo Somaj of India.”

On the 7th of Bhadra of the next year, 1869, the Bharatbarsiya Brahma Mandir was opened for public worship and the Maghotsava of that year was celebrated in the Mandir with great enthusiasm.

In the *Maghotsava* of the next year, 1870, the presentation of the annual report of the Brahmo Somaj of India by the Assistant Secretary, Pratap Chunder Mozoomdar, was a part of the mid-day proceedings of the whole-day utsava on the 11th of Magh itself. I take the following extracts from that report: (*Vide—Dharmatattva* :

সত্যের ভূমিতে, সত্য অঙ্কিত পতাকা ললাটে ধারণ করিয়া সত্যস্বরূপের পদছায়াতে ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্মসমাজের কণ্ঠা এই ব্রাহ্মমন্দির বঙ্গদেশে জন্ম গ্রহণ করে।

যে যে স্থানে গত বৎসর মধ্যে ব্রাহ্মসমাজ ও ব্রাহ্মমন্দির প্রতিষ্ঠিত হইয়াছে সমুদয় হয়ত আমরা অবগত নহি, যতদূর আমাদের গোচর হইয়াছে সেই স্থান কয়টি নিম্নে নির্দেশ করা গেল—

১। কলিকাতা, ২। ঢাকা, ৩। ময়মনসিংহ, ৪। গয়া, ৫। বরাহনগর, ৬। বেলঘরিয়া, ৭। কুষ্টিয়া, ৮। কাটোয়া, ৯। রাজমহল, ১০। টুঙলা, ১১। কাশ্মীর নিকটস্থ বন্সু, ১২। নাগপুর, ১৩। কাম্টি, ১৪। হাইদারাবাদ, ১৫। রত্নগিরি, ১৬। ইংলণ্ডস্থ “ব্যাণ্ড অফ ফেথ” নামক ব্রাহ্মসমাজ।

It is a noticable and significant fact that a theistic church founded in England is recognized as a branch of the “Brahmo Somaj of India.”

দশজন ব্যক্তি গত বৎসর স্থানে স্থানে প্রচারার্থে গমন করিয়াছিলেন। যে যে স্থানে তাঁহারা উপস্থিত হইতে পারিয়াছিলেন তাহাদিগের নাম নিম্নে উক্ত হইতেছে :—

কলিকাতা, রাণাঘাট, কুষ্টিয়া, ঢাকা, ময়মনসিংহ, সেরপুর, কুমিল্লা, বর্ধমান, কাটোয়া, গোবরডাঙ্গা, বাগআঁচড়া, হালিশহর, হরিনাভি, বারাসত, ভাগলপুর, মুন্সের, পাটনা, গয়া, এলাহাবাদ, জব্বলপুর, কানপুর, লাথুনাউ, টুণ্ডলা, লাহোর, মিরাট, মুলতান, দেরাহুন, ইত্যাদি।

যে দশজন ব্যক্তি এই সকল স্থানে গমন করিয়া ব্রাহ্মধর্ম প্রচার করিয়াছেন, তাঁহাদিগের নাম নিম্নে প্রকাশিত হইল।

শ্রীযুক্ত কেশবচন্দ্র সেন, শ্রীযুক্ত গৌরগোবিন্দ রায়, শ্রীযুক্ত কান্তিচন্দ্র মিত্র, শ্রীযুক্ত উমানাথ গুপ্ত, শ্রীযুক্ত অমৃতলাল বসু, শ্রীযুক্ত প্রতাপচন্দ্র মজুমদার, শ্রীযুক্ত ত্রৈলোক্যনাথ সাত্তাল, শ্রীযুক্ত মহেন্দ্রনাথ বসু, শ্রীযুক্ত অযোবনাথ গুপ্ত এবং শ্রীযুক্ত বিজয়কৃষ্ণ গোস্বামী।

#### DEVELOPMENTS IN THE ORGANIZATION OF THE BRAHMO SOMAJ OF INDIA.

After the Minister's return from England in 1870, the work of the Brahmo Somaj of India was organized under two definitely constituted institutions,—one for social and educational work, and the other for missionary operations. The first was named the Indian Reform Association,—and the other the Missionary Conference—known later as the Apostolic Durbar. The Congregation of the Bharatbarsiya Brahma Mandir was also at the same time put upon a constitutional basis at a meeting held on ৪ঠা আশ্বিন ১৭৯৩ শক, 1871, where Keshub Chunder Sen himself enunciated the principle that the power of electing the minister lay with the congregation ( আচার্য্য মনোনীত করিবার ভার মণ্ডলীর হাতে ) and the charge of spiritual ministration was formally vested by a resolution of the Congregation in Minister Keshub Chunder Sen without any limitation of time. (Vide Minister's Life—মধ্যবিবরণ, ৫ম অংশ, ৭৪৬ পৃ: )

The Indian Reform Association was founded on November 2, 1870, with Keshub Chunder Sen as President

and Babu Gobin Chand Dhar as Secretary. Its work was divided into five sections, each with a special committee of its own. These were the following:—(*Vide*, Minister's Life. Also ; Report of the Church of the New Dispensation by J. K. Sen).

1. Female Improvement Sections.—President: Babu Protap Chunder Mozoomdar ; Secretary: Babu Umesh Chunder Dutt.

2. General and Technical Education Section.—President: Babu Nobin Chunder Sen ; Secretary: Babu Madhub Chunder Roy ; Assistant Secretary: Babu Akshoy Kumar Roy.

3. Cheap Literature Section.—President: Babu Thakurdas Sen ; Secretary: Babu Umanath Gupta.

4. Temperance Section.—President, Babu Kanai Lal Payne ; Secretary, Babu Jadab Chunder Roy.

5. Charity Section.—President, Babu Joygopal Sen ; Secretary, Babu Kanti Chunder Mitra.

The Missionary Conference,—known later as the Apostolic Durbar—was constituted (*Vide* শ্রীদরবারের নির্ধারণ পুস্তক, Also Minister's Life,—also Report by J. K. Sen) on August 5, 1872. Its functions were thus defined:—

- ১। প্রচার প্রণালী নির্ধারণ। ২। প্রচারবিষয়ে অভাবমোচন, অভিযোগ নিষ্পত্তি। ৩। প্রচারের উপায় কি? তদ্বিভাগ।  
(১) প্রচারক প্রেরণ। (২) পুস্তক পত্রিকাদি প্রচার।

#### THE BRAHMO SOMAJ OF INDIA AND THE NEW DISPENSATION.

The Brahmo Somaj of India went on working with this simple constitution, without any alteration in its name, to the last year of the minister's life. The influx of the new spirit of devotion, and the emphasis put upon divine grace whereby the religion of the Brahmo Somaj became

transfigured and glorified as a New Dispensation of Providence, and various lines of higher spiritual culture were opened out for men who might be prepared to receive them, did not in any way affect the *organization* of the Church (*Vide* Report—by Joy Kissen Sen). Spiritually speaking, the Brahmo Somaj of India became the Church of the New Dispensation,—but *as a church organization* it continued to work without any change in its constitution or in its name. Every year in connection with the Maghotsava, even after the proclamation of the New Dispensation, there was an annual General Conference under the name of the Brahmo Somaj of India— (*Vide*—Dharmatattva ১৬ই মাঘ ও ১লা কাঙ্কন—Specially for—১৮০১, ১৮০২, ও ১৮০৩ শক, 1881, 1882, 1883) in which the principal items of business, with some variations according to occasions, were the following: Annual Report with accounts, statement by Rev. Kanti Chandra Mitra of his experiences in connection with the Mission Office,—Expression of sympathy with theistic movements and liberal thinkers and workers in other parts of the world ;—Expression of sympathy to or from mofussil Somajes, &c., &c.

The principal heads under “Income and Expenditure” for the year 1883—the last year that the minister celebrated the utsava in the flesh—are the following—Subscriptions, Donations, Mandir Fund, Girl School, Sale of books, Utsava accounts, Gifts from Mofussil Somajes, Tract Society, Bidhan Press, Dharamtattva, Sulava Samachar, Paricharika, &c.

The following are a few extracts from the Minister’s speech, at the annual General Conference, for 1879, *i.e.*, just after the secession of the Sadharan Brahmo Somaj :—

মহাত্মা রাজা রামমোহন রায় একটা উপাসনা গৃহ প্রতিষ্ঠিত করিয়া যান, তিনি কোন সমাজ সংস্থাপন করেন নাই। ভারতবর্ষীয় বান্ধ-

সমাজের গঠন প্রণালী স্বতন্ত্র।' ইহা একটা সাপ্তাহিক উপাসনা স্থান নহে। যাঁহারা ব্রাহ্মধর্মের মূলসত্যে বিশ্বাস করেন তাঁহাদিগকে একত্র করিয়া একটা উপাসনাশীল এবং নীতি পরায়ণ সমাজ গঠন করা, এবং ব্রহ্মোপাসকদিগকে সচ্চরিত্র করিবার জন্ত এই সমাজ প্রতিষ্ঠিত হইয়াছিল। সুতরাং কলিকাতার আদি ব্রাহ্মসমাজও ইহার অন্তর্গত। বর্তমান আন্দোলন দ্বারা যে একটা স্বতন্ত্রদল গঠিত হইয়াছে, যদিও সেই দলস্থ লোকেরা আপনাদিগকে ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্মসমাজের বহিভূত জ্ঞান করেন; কিন্তু ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্মসমাজ তাঁহাদিগকে পরিত্যাগ করেন নাই এবং পরিত্যাগ করিতে পারেন না। মনুষ্যের যেরূপ স্বাধীন প্রকৃতি এবং বিভিন্ন রুচি, ইহাতে এরূপ দলবৃদ্ধি অনিবার্য। যদি মনে কর যে দলবৃদ্ধি হইবে না, এরূপ আশা করা অগ্রায়। যতদিন মনুষ্যের অবস্থা এবং সংস্কারের বিভিন্নতা থাকিবে, ততদিন ভিন্ন ভিন্ন দল হইবেই হইবে। কিন্তু কতকগুলি দলবৃদ্ধি হইলেই যে ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্মসমাজ একটা সমুদায় হইবে এরূপ মনে করা ভ্রম। ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্মসমাজে ইংরেজীতে যাহাকে Party বলে অর্থাৎ ভিন্ন ভিন্ন দল হইতে পারে, কিন্তু সে সমুদায় দল ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্মসমাজের অন্তর্গত। যতদিন সে সকল দলস্থ লোকেরা ঈশ্বর এক, পরলোক আছে, এবং পাপ পুণ্যের বিচার হয় ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্মসমাজের এ সকল মূলসত্যে বিশ্বাস করিবেন, ততদিন তাঁহারা আপনারা স্বীকার করুন আর নাই করুন, ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্মসমাজের সভ্য। ঈশ্বর আশীর্বাদ করুন যেন এখান হইতে কাহারও প্রতি কোনও প্রকার বৈরনির্ঘাতন না হয়। সকল প্রকার বিরোধ হইতে ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্মসমাজ প্রমুক্ত। প্রেম বিস্তারের জন্ত ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্মসমাজ বাহ্য করেন ঈশ্বর অহুগ্রহ করিয়া তাহা সংস্কৃত করুন। (ধর্মতত্ত্ব, ১৬ই মাঘ ও ১লা ফাল্গুন, ১৮০০ শক)

#### DISINTEGRATION AFTER THE MINISTER'S DEATH.

The death of the Minister (1884) is followed by a period of confusion. The master mind is removed, the divine idea no longer works in its completeness, with its living power of adaptation and fresh evolution,—it is broken into fragmentary lights, often lost in total darkness,—and the

Church suffers an inevitable disintegration, both in its spiritual life and its outward activity. Only a few facts can be given here, indicating the main course of this disintegration.

The first question to arise was the question of ministration to the congregation of the Bharatbarsiya Brahma Mandir. By a resolution of that congregation adopted at a meeting held on ৪ঠা আশ্বিন ১৭৯৩ শক (1878)—Vide Minister's Life) in which the principle was affirmed by Keshub Chunder Sen himself that the congregation had the right of electing the minister ( আচার্য্য মনোনীত করিবার ভাব সভ্যমণ্ডলীর হাতে ) the charge of spiritual ministration had been vested in Minister Keshub Chunder Sen without any limitation of time. On the other hand the functions of the Missionary Conference (Durbar) already alluded to, as defined by itself, are concerned with regulating missionary operations and promoting spiritual culture and discipline within the missionary body, and do not include any special charge as regards appointing a minister or determining the question of ministration to the Congregation of the Bharatbarsiya Brahma Mandir. Yet, immediately on the departure of the Minister, the Durbar passed the "Vedi resolution" which affects the Bharatbarsiya Brahma Mandir alone and made arrangements about ministration in the Mandir without even thinking of consulting the Congregation. Rev. Protap Chunder Mozoomdar opposed the resolution. The upshot was that each party at last felt the necessity of appealing to the Congregation on the question of ministration which included the Vedi question. Rev. Protap Chunder, on a requisition from certain members of the Congregation, gave notice of a meeting of the Congregation to be held in the Brahma Mandir; while nine members of the Durbar addressed a letter to the Congrega-



tion,—which first imposed a burden upon the Congregation which might make it stare in surprise were it not so painfully distracting,—in the following words: (ধর্মতত্ত্ব, ১৬ই ফাল্গুন, ১৮০৫ শক।)

আপনারা বিলক্ষণ জানেন যে বর্তমান আন্দোলনের মূল গত নব বর্ষের প্রথম দিবসে আচার্য্য মহাশয় যে চারিটি ব্রত প্রেরিতগণকে দেন তাহাই। প্রেরিতগণ সকলে এই ব্রত গ্রহণ করিতে প্রস্তুত না হওয়াতে এই গোলযোগ উপস্থিত। যাহাতে প্রেরিতগণের মধ্যে উক্ত ব্রত নিবন্ধন উচ্চ ধর্ম রক্ষা হয়, তাহাই করুন।

It is here admitted that the whole cause of the trouble is a difference amongst missionaries alone, which again is due to their want of character and discipline after the ideal laid down by the Minister. And, yet in the same breath, the letter proceeds to claim an absolute spiritual supremacy for the Durbar over the church, and specially over the Calcutta Congregation, in the following words:—

আর আপনারা দরবারকে ছাড়িয়া কি প্রকারে উপাসকমণ্ডলীকে রক্ষা করিতে আশা করিতে পারেন? দরবারকে আচার্য্য মহাশয় কিরূপ নাশ করিতেন আপনারা সকলেই জানেন। তিনি দরবার ভিন্ন কোন নির্দারণ সিদ্ধান্ত করিতেন না। আপনারা কি এক্ষণে এই দরবারকে অমাত্ত করিবেন?

The letter of course is supremely unconscious of the fine humour underlying the juxtaposition of two such statements. The outcome, however, of this appeal to the Congregation from the two parties will be gathered from the following extract from the same issue of the ধর্মতত্ত্ব ১৬ই ফাল্গুন, ১৮০৫ শক।

ভাই প্রতাপচন্দ্র দরবারের নির্দারণ অগ্রাহ্য করিয়া বেদীতে বসায় দরবারে অপর নির্দারণ হয় যে “যাঁহারা দরবারে আপনারা নির্দারণ করিয়া তাহা ভঙ্গ করেন, বা প্রশ্রয় দেন অথবা সাহায্য করেন, তাঁহারা অমৃতপ্ত না হইলে দরবারে উপস্থিত না হন।” এই নির্দারণের পর

হইতে ভাই প্রতাপচন্দ্র, অমৃতলাল, ত্রৈলোক্যনাথ ও কেদারনাথ দরবারে উপস্থিত হন না।

Then follows something which affects the Brahmo Somaj of India :

দরবারের হস্তে আপাততঃ নিম্নলিখিত কার্য সকল রহিয়াছে। নববিধানের ব্রহ্মমন্দির, ধর্মতত্ত্ব, স্থলভসমাচার, পরিচারিকা, বালক-বন্ধু, মহিলাদিগের জগৎ ভিক্টোরিয়া কলেজ, দাতব্য বিভাগ, ট্রাস্ট্‌ সোসাইটী।

শ্রীযুক্ত বাবু কৃষ্ণবিহারী সেন এক্ষণে দরবার অথবা ভাই প্রতাপচন্দ্র কাহারও পক্ষ অবলম্বন করিবেন না। তিনি নিরপেক্ষ থাকিয়া লিবারেল কাগজ এবং আলবার্ট কলেজ চালাইবেন।

These are the very items which along with the Mission Office were included within the Report of the Brahmo Somaj of India up to the time of the minister's death.

Then comes the following news:—

ভাই প্রতাপচন্দ্র দরবারকে অগ্রাহ্য করিয়া মন্দিরে বৃহস্পতিবার সন্ধ্যা সময়ে উপাসকদিগের সভা হইবে এরূপ বিজ্ঞাপন দেন ও দরবারের কতিপয় সভ্যের সাক্ষাতে দরবারের প্রতি যৎপরোনাস্তি অবমাননাসূচক কথা বলেন। একজনে আধিপত্য করিয়া মন্দিরে নববিধানের বিরুদ্ধে যথেষ্ট ব্যবহার না করেন এজগৎ অন্তত সভা করিবার বিজ্ঞাপন দিয়া দরবার মন্দিরের দ্বার অবরুদ্ধ করেন।

The Gordian knot was thus cut, and the dismembered Durbar by this process established its *eternal* right to control and have the sole charge of the spiritual ministration to the congregation of the Bharatbarsiya Brahma Mandir !

Poor congregation ! It does not appear from the records whether they had any thing to say in the matter, except appointing a "Peace Committee" to settle the differences amongst the missionaries, and the rule was henceforth established—with one revolutionary break for a

short period—that the Congregation was to exist for the Missionaries, while irreconcilably divided too amongst themselves, and not the Missionaries for the Congregation !

The next point to note is the following extract from the ধর্মতত্ত্ব of ১লা চৈত্র, ১৮০৫ শক ।

শ্রীদরবার—৮ই ফাল্গুন, ১৮০৫—ভাই কান্তিচন্দ্র মিত্র নিম্নলিখিত আবেদন দরবারে উপস্থিত করিলেন, “যেহেতুক ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্মসমাজের সহকারী সম্পাদক শ্রদ্ধেয় ভাই শ্রীযুক্ত প্রতাপচন্দ্র মজুমদার দরবারের নির্ধারণ অগ্রাহ্য করিয়া কার্য্য করিতেছেন, \* \* \* \* \* যেহেতু আমি বিশ্বাস করিতাম ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্মসমাজ প্রেরিত দরবারের অধীন, কিন্তু এইক্ষণে দেখিতেছি ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্মসমাজ দরবারের বিরোধী হইয়াছে । অতএব এই সকল কারণে আমি বিনীত ভাবে দরবারের নিকট বিদিত করিতেছি যে ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্মসমাজের অধীনস্থ প্রচার কার্যালয়ের ভার যাহা অনেক দিন হইতে আমার উপর দরবার কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত হওয়ায় আমি এতদিন কার্য্য করিয়া আসিতেছিলাম, গত রবিবার হইতে সেই ভার পরিত্যাগ করিয়াছি, আর ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্মসমাজের সঙ্গে কোন প্রকার বিষয় কার্য্যের যোগ রাখিতে পারি না । অতএব দরবার আমার নিকট হইতে সমস্ত বুঝিয়া লইয়া ঐ কার্য্যভার হইতে আমাকে অব্যাহতি প্রদান করেন ।

পত্রপাঠান্তে উপরিলিখিত আবেদন গ্রাহ্য হইল । ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্মসমাজের প্রচার কার্যালয়ের সহিত সম্বন্ধ রহিত হইল ।

This disposes of the contention of those who maintain that it was the Minister who had given up the Brahmo Somaj of India after he proclaimed the New Dispensation. It will be also clear from this that it is not simply a question of names, but it is the question of maintaining or destroying the integrity of the church itself.

In the report of *Maghotsava* of the next year, 1885, however, we find the following : ধর্মতত্ত্ব, ১৬ই মাঘ, ১লা ফাল্গুন, ১৮০৬ )

১০ই মাঘ, বৃহস্পতিবার। অল্প ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্ম সমাজের সাধারণ সভা। এদিন আমাদের নিকট চিরস্মরণীয় থাকিবে, কেননা সমুদায় বৎসরে যে বাটিকা বৃষ্টি তুফান চলিতেছিল, তাহা মন্দবেগ হইবার সূত্রপাত এই দিনে উপস্থিত হয়। এদিন সমুদায় প্রেরিতবর্গ এবং তাঁহাদিগের বন্ধুগণ সকলে আলবার্ট হলে অপরাহ্ন ৪টা সময় একত্র মিলিত হন। সর্বসম্মতিতে ভাই প্রতাপচন্দ্র মজুমদার সভাপতির আসন পরিগ্রহ করেন। সভাপতি সর্বনিয়ন্তা ভগবানের নিকট প্রার্থনা করিয়া সভার কার্যারম্ভের সূচনা করিলে, ভাই অমৃতলাল বসু বর্তমান অমিল কিছুই নহে উহা মিলনে পরিণত হইবে এতৎসম্বন্ধে কিছু বলিয়া এই প্রস্তাব করেন যে, ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্মসমাজ এবং নববিধান, এ দুই যে ভিন্ন নয় একই, ইহা লিপিবদ্ধ হয়। এ সময়ে ব্রাহ্মসমাজের অগ্রাগ্র বিভাগের সহিত ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্মসমাজের যে সম্বন্ধ আছে, তাহাও লিপিবদ্ধ হয়, কেহ কেহ অস্বীকার করেন, কিন্তু সেটা জ্ঞাত বিষয় বলিয়া তাহা পরিগৃহীত হয় না। সভাপতি বলেন অল্প এই পর্য্যন্ত সভার কার্য হইয়া উহা স্তগিত থাকুক, অল্প কোন প্রস্তাব সভার সম্মুখে আনয়ন করিবার প্রয়োজন নাই, কেননা তাহাতে অনেক বাদান্তবাদের সম্ভাবনা।

This United Utsava of 1885, however, did not lead to a restoration of the lost spirit of organization, and the following extract from an article on “ভাবী সমাজবন্ধন” in the *Dharmatattva* of ১৬ই ফাল্গুন, ১৮০৮ (1886) will give some idea of the disintegrated condition into which the Brahmo Somaj of India or the Church of the New Dispensation (the name is immaterial so far as this matter is concerned) sunk within two years of the death of the Minister.

পূর্বসহব্যবস্থান মধ্যে এই কয়টি কার্য নির্দিষ্ট আছে :—১। আয় ব্যয়, ২। প্রচারক প্রেরণ, ৩। পুস্তক মুদ্রাঙ্কণ ও প্রকটন, ৪। ব্রাহ্মিকা সমাজ ও স্ত্রীশিক্ষা প্রণালী সংস্থাপন, ৫। প্রকাশ্য বিদ্যালয়ে বালকদিগকে উপদেশ দান। যখন ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্মসমাজ প্রতিষ্ঠিত হয়, তখন স্বভাবতঃ এই কার্যগুলি তত্ক্ষণে নিপতিত হয়। এখন সমাজ

নিষক্কন করিতে গেলে, এই কার্যগুলিই আসিয়া পড়িতেছে। তন্মধ্যে প্রচার সম্বন্ধীয় সমুদায় বিষয় চিরদিনই শ্রীদরবার কর্তৃক নিষ্পন্ন হইবে। পূর্বে যে ব্রাহ্মিকা সমাজ ছিল তাহা এখন আধ্যাত্মিক সমাজ নামে অভিহিত, তাহার স্বতন্ত্র সহব্যবস্থান আছে, কর্মচারী আছে। প্রকাশ্য বিদ্যালয়ে উপদেশ দান কার্যটি এখন আলবার্ট কলেজের উপর নিপতিত হইয়াছে। অবশেষে রহিল আত্মব্যয়। বর্তমানে এই বিষয় লইয়া সমবেত কার্য আবশ্যক।

Though the enumeration of the heads of work included within the scope of the Brahmo Somaj of India in this statement is rather defective and incomplete,—the state of decentralization, if not disorganization, herein set forth, became henceforth the established rule. It has to be added that the greatest decentralization was within the missionary body itself, and the mission work under the Durbar was far from being the whole of the missionary activities during the period following the death of the minister. As mentioned in the extract previously given from the *Dharmattatva*, at least four missionaries, and all of them undoubtedly belonging to the Church of the New Dispensation (or the Brahmo Somaj of India,—again, I point out that the name is immaterial), viz., Rev. Protap Chunder Mozoomdar, Troilokya Nath Sanyal, Amrita Lal Bose, and Kedarnath Dey, were working outside the so-called Durbar.

#### MOVEMENT FOR RE-ORGANIZATION.

I now come to the Report proper of our proceedings during the last year with reference to the Brahmo Somaj of India. From 1886 to 1906 is a long leap. Heaven alone knows whether the course of events during these twenty years has made the community of believers better or less fitted to combine again into an organized religious life,—into a *Church* in the sense in which Keshub Chunder Sen

understood it ; whether it has given us a clearer, truer, deeper insight into the Spirit of the New Dispensation, the spirit of the Brahmo Somaj of India, and the spirit of Minister Keshub Chunder Sen ; whether we have at last a body of missionaries (call that body by whatever name you like) who are prepared to work, not individually or in a scattered fashion, but in the spirit of harmony in an organization of love, truth and holiness, under a common inspiration and a common discipline ; whether the general body of believers are prepared to shake off their indifference, their aloofness, their thoughtlessness, their timidity, their shrinking from responsibility, and worship and work together in a spirit of faith, enthusiasm and self-consecration ; whether the relation between the body of missionaries thus united and the general body of believers can be harmoniously settled ; and finally whether the Church as thus organized is prepared to start and carry on institutions for the spiritual, social, educational, and material advancement of the country. Heaven alone knows if these conditions and materials exist among us, and in what form. It is my business to-day only to record what has been done in the course of the last year, in the spirit of faith and hope, tremulous with a hundred fears, misgivings and apprehensions, that these conditions and materials will be vouchsafed by Providence, and that His Truth, Love and Holiness will crush and triumph over our sins and failings.

My report will be incomplete without a mention, in the first instance, of the fact, that all through this period of confusion, it was the earnest and cherished hope of the Rev. Protap Chunder Mozoomdar that the Brahmo Somaj of India should once more become a living organization, he lived and died in this hope and faith, though his actual attempts to revive it were ineffectual and fruitless ; the same hope and faith inspired the ceaseless and untiring,

though almost single-handed and fruitless efforts in his old age of another believer,—our late lamented and esteemed friend, Dr. Durga Das Roy of Dacca. The organized attempt, however, to bring about the revival was undertaken when both of these had passed away.

The present movement begins with the appointment of a "Provisional Committee" at a public meeting held at the Bharatbarshiya Brahma Mandir, Calcutta, on the 24th January, 1906, "to draw up a scheme of organization for the Brahmo Somaj of India." The Committee consisted of the following:—

Revs. Gour Govinda Roy, Kanti Chandra Mitra, Troilakya Nath Sanyal, Braja Gopal Niyogi, Baikuntha Nath Ghose, Promotho Loll Sen.

Babus Lalita Mohon Roy, Nanda Lal Sen, Dharendra Lal Khastgir, Messrs. Nirmal Chunder Sen, Prosanta Kumar Sen, Subodh Chunder Roy, Profs. T. L. Vaswani, Pramotho Nath Chatterjee, with Prof. Mohit Chunder Sen as Secretary and Mr. Hassaram V. Tharanec as Assistant Secretary.

This "Provisional Committee" held several sittings and by the devoted labours of Prof. Mohit Chandra Sen, the Secretary, and Prof. T. L. Vaswani,—a scheme of organization was drawn up and circulated amongst practically all the Brahmo Somajes in India, so far as a list of them could be had, and also a large number of well-known and representative Brahmos in different parts of the country,—while at the same time their opinions and suggestions on the scheme were invited.

As an upshot of these preliminary measures, a Conference was convened by Rev. Promotho Loll Sen, who had been appointed Secretary of the Provisional Committee in the place of Prof. Mohit Chunder Sen (after his sad and

sudden departure from the world) at the Bharatbarshiya Brahma Mandir, on the 25th August, 1906,—where the following resolution was adopted *mem. con.*

1. Resolved,—that with a view to combine the benefits of organization with the spirit of Faith and the service of God, and to bring together into a living union all the individuals and bodies in different parts of the country having communion with the New Dispensation, and also to promote or establish co-operation and fellowship, with all theistic bodies, or bodies working in the cause of spiritual religion in India or elsewhere,—the *constitution* of the Church of the New Dispensation in India be re-organized.

The Church of the New Dispensation in India declares its unbroken continuity in organization and spirit with the Brahma Somaj of India founded in 1866 ; its continuity in spirit with the Brahma Somaj founded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy in 1830 ; and its identity in spirit with the National Church of India, and also the Church Universal—"that invisible Kingdom of God in which is all truth, all love, all holiness."

The object of this organization shall be :—

1. To promote the Cause and extend the Faith and Principles of the New Dispensation.

2 To bring together into a living union all the individuals and bodies in different parts of the country declaring their faith in and having communion with the spirit of the New Dispensation.

3. To co-operate, wherever possible, with all theistic bodies, and particularly with different sections of the Brahma Somaj in India.

4. To establish and promote fellowship with all who are striving, here or in any part of the world, to reconcile



Religion with Science, to unite Spiritual Ideals with Social Life, to bring religion into man's daily life on earth, to exalt Purity above Doctrine, Life above Profession, Spirit above Letter.

Its Scheme of Work shall include for the present :—

1. Organizing Missionary efforts, Mission Offices, Mission Funds and Mission Work generally.
2. Promoting and disseminating Theistic Literature.
3. Promoting Philanthropic Work and Social Reform.

4. Promoting Religious and Theological Education.

The Management and Executive Work of the Organization shall be vested in a *Council* (with a Secretary and an Assistant Secretary) consisting of :—

- (a) All Apostles and Missionaries of the Brahmo Somaj of India.
- (b) All Lay-Workers, (who shall be accepted as such by the Council).
- (c) Representatives elected annually—by different congregations. (The number of representatives to be elected by each congregation to be determined by the Council).

There will be an annual meeting during the celebration of Maghotsava—when, amongst other items of business that may arise, the annual report will be presented and discussed.

The Council shall lay down all minor rules of business, —while important or disputed changes in the constitution shall not be adopted except at an annual meeting on a recommendation from, or reference by, the Council.

In accordance with the clause in the Resolution requiring that the management and executive work of the organization shall be vested in a Council, the Conference

elected the first Council, the members holding their office until the next Maghotsab. The following were to be the members of the first Council :—

All the apostles and missionaries of the Church of the New Dispensation and the following gentlemen :—

Lala Kashiram of Lahore.

Babus Prakash Chunder Roy, Barhamdeo Narain,  
Paresh Nath Chatterjee, Nogendra Chandra  
Mitra, of Bankipur.

Babus Nibaran Chunder Mukerji, Harisundar Bose  
of Bhagalpur.

Babu Nitya Gopal Roy of Ghazipur.

„ Rajeshwar Gupta of Chittagong.

„ Sashi Bhusan Talukdar of Tangail.

Drs. R. L. Dutt, Moti Lal Mukerji, Paresranjan Roy,  
Satyendra Nath Sen, Prof. T. L. Vaswani, and Babus  
Lalita Mohon Roy, Behari Lal Sen, Subodh Chunder Roy,  
Nirmal Chunder Sen, Priya Nath Mullik, Ashutosh Roy,  
Nanda Lal Sen, Dharendra Lal Khastgir, Prasanta Kumar  
Sen, Amritananda Roy, Benoyendra Nath Sen, of Calcutta.

It was further resolved :

That Prof. Benoyendra Nath Sen be the Secretary, and  
Babu Lalita Mohon Roy the Assistant Secretary of the  
Brahmo Somaj of India till the next *Maghotsob*.

Since the adoption of this resolution, the Council has  
had only one opportunity of meeting, and that was on the  
31st December, 1906, at the Bharatbarshiya Brahma  
Mandir. This meeting was graced by the presence of  
several of our highly esteemed mofussil members, and was  
very encouraging as regards the cordiality of spirit, and  
mutual agreement and sympathy on essential points in the  
interchange of ideas, that characterised its proceedings.

But the only business that could be done at the meeting was :

(1) The appointment of a Committee for the purpose of promoting and disseminating theistic literature.

(2) The passing of only one rule of business, *viz.* That in all meetings of the Council, ten members, of whom two at least must be missionaries, shall form a quorum.

This is our present situation. The rules of business including the rule for the election of the next Council, have still to be drawn up by the Council, the Council has to decide how the mofussil somajes are to be represented,—if any constitutional change is necessary, the Council alone can recommend such a change to the Conference ;—and a truly representative meeting of the Council is possible only when a fair number of our mofussil members, such as were brought together by the Theistic Conference in Calcutta, are present.

But the most important question waiting to be decided is the question of our missionary organization. As a matter of fact, the missionaries are still divided amongst themselves. Is the Brahmo Somaj of India to enter direct relations with individual missionaries, which would be trying an altogether new experiment, because even in the period before the Missionary Conference or Durbar was formally constituted, there was a union of heart, soul, and character amongst the missionaries of the Brahmo Somaj of India, and there was at least a common mission office ; or is the Brahmo Somaj of India to have relations only with an organized missionary body, and if so under what form of organisation ? Unless, and until this question is satisfactorily answered, I venture to affirm, that no real work can be proceeded with under the name of the Brahmo Somaj of India,—and any resolutions that may be passed will continue to be only paper resolutions.

### **The Theistic Conference.**

The Theistic Conference used to have its sitting only once a year during the Christmas Week when the National Congress, Social Conference and other National Movements have their Annual Meetings. The period is therefore looked upon as the National Week. The national leaders belonging to the Brahmo Somajes or the Prarthana Somajes would go to attend the National Congress, and they wanted to avail themselves of the occasion to meet together and invite other Brahmo leaders for united prayers and services and deliberations on questions concerning the Theistic Movement in India. The first Theistic Conference was probably held in Bombay, to which Rev. Bhai P. C. Mozoomdar was invited to preside. The Presidential addresses, if these could be collected and published, would undoubtedly be some of the most valuable contributions to the literature of the Brahmo Somaj.

At Lahore in 1909 Benoyendranath was requested to preside and he accepted the honour. Just then his father was lying seriously ill and he died. To Benoyendranath, to whom every occasion came with a Divine call, every event brought a special message for him from God, and whose life was an interlaced web of relations, the very garment of many-coloured threads woven by his sense of duty and consecrated service to the Spirit of God, the death of his dear father, so sweet, so devout and loving, so self-forgetting in the service of his children, with a child-like faith and trust, came with an eternal significance for his life, and his loving heart was full of his father for many days till through prayer and worship—his individual worship and family worship of every day, he had the mystery opened up and the veil removed, and the gate opening into the unknown unlatched, and could hold free and easy communion with the departed soul,

with his heart flowing out into his father's and flooded over with a full light from the land beyond the grave. The outpourings of his heart on the day of the family service after the period of mourning,—his whole being coming out through the heart, his prayers and apostrophisings, all recoiled on him with a tremour and a shock running through his whole system. These showed that the whole day he could have no other thought. On that day he left for Lahore. He could not on that day or any other day before during the period of mourning call up his mind to any thought about his Presidential address. He sat for a few minutes to get down a few sentences and he gave up the attempt. But he is always at his best because he surrenders himself to the Spirit of the occasion, and the spirit flows out through him and his voice with its full melody and flashes out with a light which opens out a new heaven and a new earth and invests the life with all its relations with a new significance and an unearthly beauty. As the train was running through the land watered by the *Sutlej* and the *Drisatbati* he became 'possessed' with the Spirit of the *Rishis* of ancient *Brahma-barlha*. As the salt-rocks shining and resplendent with the reflections of the morning light came to his view and the bright orb in all its glory and majesty rose up from below the horizon spreading a halo of glory and a crown of light over the mountains and fringing the clouds with golden rays here or setting them on fire there, he saw the shining Deity in all those splendours of nature and thought of the *Devas* or shining Deities to whom the ancient *Rishis* sent out their hearts in the form of hymns addressed to them, gathered together to form the *Rig-Veda*. He reached Lahore. He lived and moved in the Spirit of the land, whose glimpse he had got and gathered on the way. Lala Kashiram and other friends of the Punjab

Brahmo Somaj received him at the station. He and his friends from Calcutta were accommodated in the Sirdar Dayal Sing School building. Lala Kashiram was all attention to the guests. His genial and at the same time forceful personality, always himself in his talk, manners and dealings,—his short, beautiful, well-built, perfectly shaped and chiselled form throbbing and pulsating with life at every moment, his very soul, as it were, coming out at every moment through all his movements with a mighty rush, his face aglow with a lustre that comes from the depth of communion with the shining Perfect—the Soul of health and beauty, his talk enlivened with humour and sparkling with wit and flowing out in a stream of light, represented the Soul of Punjab baptised and re-baptised every day, nay every hour in the Spirit of the New Dispensation. The proceedings of the Conference began. After the Chairman of the Reception Committee had delivered his address extending the greetings of the Committee to the guests, Benoyendranath stood up to deliver his Presidential address. He spoke *extempore* without notes. He spoke as the feeling came rushing, and he felt as he lived, and he lived in perfect tune with the Spirit of all lands and ages; and through him the Soul of Punjab—the *Brahma-ban̄tha*,—the Punjab with its hoary past, where on the banks of the rivers the forefathers of the Indian Aryans first built their homes and composed the hymns of the *Rig-veda*, saw the shining deities or *Devas*, offered sacrifices and oblations and stood enraptured before the shining orb, lost in the vision of the most resplendent Presence,—the Sun in the sun, the Creator of the universe, bursting out into ejaculations of the mystic *Om*,—the Punjab, the land of Guru Nanak, so sweet, so charming, so inspiring, uplifting, re-constructing, creating a new life and a new race,—the Punjab of the

heroic mould, strong as adamant in faith passing through ordeals of years and decades and coming out in the glory of its faith a conquering power to illumine with its deeds the pages of the history of India of its dark age and period of transition,—the Punjab of to-day and of the future, with its soul of strength and music coming out in deeds of valour and as a sustaining power, and in the sublime *Arati* and *Bhajan*, finding its just place at the centre in the federation of races which Indian national life, now in the making and even passing through the throes of a new birth, must bring about,—the whole Punjab with its past, present and future ‘possessed’ his soul, found a voice and came out through his tongue in a torrential flow of music, and spread a glow and gave a fulness to his eyes and look and voice, making all eloquent,—his eloquence coming out in a ceaseless rhythmic flow only to create a magic spell, to bathe in light, and to illumine the mind with divine wisdom. He touched on all the problems of the day, on the ideals and activities of the Brahmo-Somaj, and brought out the real soul of the Movement in its continuous unfolding,—the soul which is the product of the long past lost in eternity and is a new creation, with a long history behind it and without a history, born as it is, of the Spirit to unfold a new story of its self-manifestation and enact a new drama of life through all the problems and situations of the New Age and to proclaim the New Dispensation of the New Age and of all ages,—the New Life,—the life of the Spirit in and through all, unfolding itself through all times bringing new ages with their new situations and new problems to be solved through and by life in the Spirit in its perpetual flow. He touched on no questions on which he did not throw a new light—the light that he carries in his soul from the undying source of all light in the

depth of being. The Brahmo Somaj is a new awakening of the soul and is a new creation, and is a creative power and an uplifting lever. It is an education movement. To Benoyendranath faith and trust and reverence are the only educative agencies; these alone call up the divinity in man to work itself out in and through life and life-movements. To the eye of the artist the block of stone and the colours and their disposition contain the soul of beauty, or no one could bring out the picture of beauty out of them, and the artist uses his chisel and brushes with the hand of reverence, and the soul of beauty comes out in its form of beauty, and the ideas—of strength or wisdom, of motherhood or of faith shining and resplendent with its vision of the glory of resurrection beyond the universe of the senses, find their forms, clothed in beauty. To Benoyendranath the term 'depressed class' was extremely depressing and killing—killing the soul within. Approach men with faith, surround them with an air of trust and light of reverence, and the soul comes out of itself. This to him was education, and he knew of no other education. Wisdom is born and it grows from within, and true life and light are deep in the soul, which is awakened when the life is bored through with faith. It is reverence which awakens self-knowledge and self-reverence which lead to 'sovrain power'. Knowledge and reverence do not grow side by side to make the mind and soul 'one music swell'; it is reverence which is the key to open out the region of light, reverence opens out the world of wonder and mystery, and there comes knowledge in its fulness. Intellect here does not see in parts, but through it the full-orbed soul shines out.

As a sequel to this lecture Benoyendranath gave another lecture on the gospel of the Age. Here he began:



with Hegel's famous dictum—The greatest discovery of the age is the discovery of personality. Here he claimed the Divine right of every man on every nation to grow to the fulness and perfection of its being and the freedom of life to unfold itself with all its contents unto the beauty and perfection of Divine life and to throw off all obstacles from family, society, government,—moral, social and political in the way of its growth and development so that the God in man and humanity may work himself out to bring about a new order—a new life and a new world—the life of deeper harmony, and personality, self-determining and self-creative and self-organising personality may spring up in the individual, as in the federation of nations.

On his way back he halted at Delhi, Agra and Benares to see once more the places of historical interest and the works of art,—the *Taj*—the dream in marble,—the consecrated heart embodied, the tears crystalised,—the very picture of beauty,—the brightest jewel on a large scale 'finished by the jewellers and conceived by the Titans,' which to him would spread a new magic charm with every change of weather and in every hour of the day,—in twilight, in the blaze of day, bathed in morning light or surrounded with a sun-set glow, flooded over with moonbeams or in the shadow of the dark, starry nights, and would carry him to the land of dreams,—the supreme reality.

Benoyendranath was trying to write out the address for the Conference but owing to his father's illness and death immediately before the meeting, he could just jot down some notes which are appended here, though quite incomplete :—

“Beloved Brethren,

We meet together in this Conference in response to a sacred call. There are many among us who, ever since the idea of an All-India Theistic Conference was first started, have devoted themselves heart and soul to its realization, and have been labouring year after year to make it what it ought to be. May the blessing of God rest upon all their efforts! They are the outcome of faith, of love and hope centred in the highest ideals and aspirations of the age, and flowing out in all directions, to all parts of the country from whence we have come and assembled together here to contribute each our humble mite towards the fulfilment of those ideals. The first thing is to feel that we have, each one of us, something to contribute, and I earnestly invite you to realize this at the outset. The call has come to every one of you, the voice of the Spirit, the small whisper of faith and love in the soul, and thus you are all here, some of you perhaps at great personal sacrifice.

Sitting in the position where you out of your brotherly kindness have done me the honour to place me, I should have felt utterly helpless if I had not realized that I have not been invited here to make a brilliant speech, nor have you been invited to listen to one. It is the touch of soul with soul that we all want. We all live under the shadow of some unfulfilled hope, a restless yearning which takes us out of our little selves, and out of our little homes, and draws us towards the brethren whose homes are elsewhere, in some other province than our own; and we are endeavouring to come out into the open where the sun shines, and where the shadow, we hope, will turn into light. What we want above everything else is to sit together at the footstool of the Almighty, and realize that

we are all brethren in faith,—children of the same Father,—that Bombay and Madras, Punjab and Bengal, and the so many other provinces and districts of this vast country are but so many different chambers in the same Father's house. We want to rekindle our faith at the altar-fire of each other's soul, to read our own hopes and aspirations written in the lines on our brethren's faces;—we meet to put our hearts and souls together in the furtherance of a cause which is the highest and holiest of all causes,—the cause of Love, the cause of our beloved Fatherland, the cause of all Humanity which is the cause of God Himself ' Brethren, it is this thought that has induced me to lay aside, as mere trifles, all considerations of personal weakness and unworthiness and helplessness, and respond with all my heart to your kind invitation to come and give my best services to this All-India Theistic Conference.

It is undoubtedly a matter of great rejoicing that we meet this year in the land of Guru Nanak—a name that must always call forth the warmest enthusiasm in the heart of every Indian Theist. Let us at the outset of our proceedings offer to him the homage of our heartfelt reverence and love! All glory to that devoted worshipper of the one true God,—who proclaimed the sovereignty of the One and One alone ;—who was also a prophet of Harmony,—having realized in his life the deeper harmony of Hinduism and Islam,—about whom it has been said that he illustrated and united in his life the monotheistic and missionary enthusiasm of Kabir, and the inebriated love and devotion of Sri Gouranga! May the benedictions of his Spirit be upon this Conference! It is now more than half a century since Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore carried to Bengal from the Punjab that priceless jewel of the Theist's heart, that grand *Arati* hymn of Guru Nanak :

“These are Thy Lamps—the sun and the moon  
On the star-jewelled firmament,  
Thy incense rises with the breeze that fans Thy throne  
Out of the lustrous flowering woods;  
How grand is Thy *Arati*, O Saviour of the world,  
While the drum gives out its music, unbeaten by human  
hands!”

That was a great day in the history of the Brahmo Somaj. Next to that stray leaf of the *Upanishads* which he accidentally discovered, this *Arati* hymn of Guru Nanak was a great revelation to the Maharshi's heart. The yearning for the one true God had just awakened in his soul, and had become a restless passion, and he was feverishly seeking for some response from outside;—it seemed as if through the *Upanishads* the ancient *Rishis* of India said “Amen” to the yearnings of his soul; and through that hymn of Guru Nanak,—the Punjab at the close of mediæval India said “Amen”! To-day, the yearning for the one true God goes forth out of the heart of all India,—let the Punjab and Bengal, Madras and Bombay, the United Provinces and Burmah and all the rest unite in saying “Amen”!

We cannot forget that we have still to make the Theistic Conference a reality. As yet, it is only an idea. I am afraid the importance of its object, or, for the matter of that, of the whole Theistic movement in India, is still far from being properly realized; it has not yet entered deep enough into the awakened consciousness of the children of the soil. Witness, for one thing, the fact that we have not yet been able to put it on an independent footing, choosing a place and time of our own; it is apprehended there would not be interest enough, enthusiasm enough to draw a sufficiently large number of representatives from all parts of the country to deliberate

upon the theistic cause alone. How extremely deplorable is this one significant fact for us and our country! Ask any thoughtful man in India,—What is the one great need of the people of this country,—and there can be but one answer,—it is a purification of its religion. There are men, I know, who would be inclined to think that the Indian problem of the present day is an economic problem. I myself fully appreciate and deeply sympathise with the importance of that problem. But I have not the slightest doubt that the problem of religion is far deeper, much more fundamental. Some of the great thinkers of the present age are agreed in maintaining that the main forces that have shaped the whole course of the world's history are, at bottom, two,—the economic and the religious. These are fundamentals,—and naturally enough;—because the *end* of human desire and action must be either *physical* well-being or *spiritual* well-being. Everything else is but a *means* towards the attainment of one or the other, or both of these *ends*. The social and the political constitution of a people are amongst such *means*. Now consider the case of India. We are all anxious to secure the economic advancement of the country, we are all anxious to secure political reform. But both the political and the economic questions are indissolubly mixed up with the social fabric, and the social fabric, in India of all the countries of the world, rests entirely upon a religious basis. Whatever might be the case in other countries, in India at any rate you cannot ignore religion, or even give to it a secondary place. Because there is no life of the people apart from religion. Their eating, drinking, bathing, travelling, all their social relations and dealings with one another as well as with foreigners and people outside their society, their pursuits and habits of life, their manners and ceremonials, every event that happens

to them from birth to the moment of death, all are absolutely controlled or materially influenced by their religion. It is of the utmost importance, therefore, that this religion should be kept pure,—free from stagnation, superstition, backwarders, free from the waste products that naturally accumulate with time;—a free, living, life-giving force that will serve as a perennial inspiration to the people. Unto India, and the highest and the most imperative of all injunctions is: keep thy religion pure, for out of it are all the issues of life!

The welcome of the Theistic Conference is extended to all who recognize this importance of the religious problem in India. It is not in any sense a sectional movement. We earnestly invite the co-operation of every one who is striving after the realization of a purer faith, a holier practice. In certain matters we have certainly outgrown the traditional beliefs of the past,—and we are trying to shape our creed, our worship, our ceremonial, our social institutions, our life, in accordance with the Light of the age; but this does not mean that the roots of our religion are not laid deep in our national thought and life. Like our brethren in the West, who, just like ourselves, are striving after a purer faith and worship and ritual, we also can say:

“We may not think our fathers’ thought,  
Their creed our lips may alter,  
But in the faith they dearly brought,  
Our hearts shall never falter,  
’Twas faith in Man, ’twas faith in God,  
’Twas faith in Truth and Beauty;  
In Reason’s right, and Freedom’s might,  
And all-controlling Duty.”

But the difficulty comes in when we think not only of the vast dimensions of the country, but its endless

variety of languages, institutions and customs. There is one lesson which every worker in India must have to learn early or late,—and that is the lesson of patience. Whatever the sphere of work may be. The Light has dawned and a few isolated souls here and there may rejoice in its glory,—but when you think of the masses, the teeming and seething millions in the country, your heart sinks almost in despair, and you ask, when will they see the light of salvation? The political or industrial or social or religious reformer in the first enthusiasm of his ideal fancies that he has simply to work a little hard, and the day of redemption will not be far off. Alas, he does not know yet that generations of workers like him will pass away, while the rigid conservatism of the land will stand rooted as the mountain range that crests its head. And yet he must work steadily on, true to the light in his own soul, never expecting to see much tangible result of his work in his lifetime

But one such life, followed by another, and then another, and these lives will not be lost. They shall remain, and they will form a leaven which shall leaven the whole mass till one day the whole country stands transformed. Thus it is not through human efforts, but by an operation of the law of life, through the mysterious working of Providence himself shall the salvation of the land be brought about.”

### **The Old and the New Order.**

*[A synopsis of a sermon preached by Prof Benoyendranath Sen at the Theistic Conference, 1911]*

Benoyendranath began with a touching and loyal reference to the visit of His Majesty King George V. to this Great Eastern Empire. He said:—There was on all

sides, the stirring as of a new life. The whole Indian peninsula was athrill with the pulsation of a new joy. The princes and peoples of this historic land vied with one another in offering heartfelt gratitude and homage to the August Emperor who came to them as an old friend but crowned with new glory. It behoved them, the representatives of Indian Theists gathered in that Conference to offer their share of homage and gratitude to the Sovereign and to swell with their feeble but respectful voice, the national chorus of thanksgiving and prayer that was rising unto the Throne of the Almighty at that blessed hour. It behoved them also to contemplate the noble ideals, the precious heritage of the Theistic Church of India, which could alone put the seal of sanctity and saving grace on the aspirations that were surging in their breasts.

They seemed to be at the threshold of a new order of things. They had the promise of the birth of a new Indian nationality. Had they not heard a new Gospel of life also? He would like to draw the attention to one aspect of that Gospel that morning. In India of the past, the life of a man in society was pre-eminently communistic. He was a member of his community first, an individual afterwards. The entire career of the individual was determined for him by the accident of his birth. His birth tied him down to a particular community. The society had a ready-made catalogue of duties for the community. His birth determined his station and dictated to him the vocation of his life. He had to submit to social regulations, and restrictions at every step. His community controlled the minutest details of his life. It had sanctioned for him his profession and registered for him his duties and obligations. As a son, husband, father, or a friend he had corresponding duties prescribed to him by the society. But this communistic life was a preparation for



and a prelude to the final state of liberation with which the society had absolutely no concern. When the individual left the earth-plane, his merit and demerit were supposed inexorably to cling to the unaided individual. Though he was made to sow by others, he was left to reap alone. So his other-worldly life was extremely individualistic. He had to sever all social connections. He had to achieve liberation by his individual efforts, and in the attainment of final liberation he recognised no sharer.

But they heard a more cheering Gospel of life. It was a message of the emancipation of the individual from all extraneous bondage. The individual would now brook no artificial restrictions. The communistic life was gradually giving way to an individualistic life. Society was coming to recognise the individual as a person. The individual could exercise his own free will and choose any vocation of life. There was no bar except his own inherent incapacity to stand in his way. He was at liberty to make or mar his fortune, acquire merit or demerit by his individual efforts. But the individual to-day would not seek a solitary salvation. He should aspire to be a citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven which is "accessible to all." He cannot forsake the least of God's creatures. He cannot seek liberation if anybody be in bondage. The heavenly life of the man of the new age is eminently collectivistic. This was in fact the reversal of the old ideals.

But did not this individualistic life endanger all salutary social bonds? Yes, this life had its dangers also. When the communistic control was removed from the individual, the uncontrolled impulses might lead to anarchy and social disruption. The inestimable privilege of self-determination might not infrequently degenerate into the

irrational exercise of self-will. Such thing has sometimes happened in the West when license has been mistaken for liberty, unbridled individualism is as pernicious to the genuine growth of the individual as the tyranny of a blind communion. The new gospel has a significant note at this crisis. It proclaims that true independence is God-dependence and reminds the world that the voice of Conscience is the voice of God. The individual to-day is not satisfied with the dead letter of a by-gone prophecy. He is not satisfied with "So spake the Lord." He aspires to hear the living voice of the living God in the inner sanctuary of the soul. Thus tradition is made to make room for inspiration.

This does not mean the explosion of all tradition. Tradition rather stands transfigured in the new light. This is no solution of historic continuity. It is the re-creation and re-interpretation of history. This is no sundering of social obligations; social obligations are rather sanctified and transformed into spiritual connections which are not simply of Time but of a time-embracing Eternity. This life of inspiration is not catastrophic, not certainly exclusive. It is the simple natural life of every son of God who has realised the Divine sonship through a self-less devotion to the loving Father. And India is preaching to-day the supreme need of sweet, simple, spiritual worship that uplifts the individual and attunes him to the Infinite and makes him a fit vessel for the reception of inspiration. This is an age of spiritual commerce between nations. Each nation is laying its mite at the altar of Universal Humanity. It had often occurred to the speaker that in the Future Parliament of man and the Federation of the world, India would have given to her, her rightful place and that she would yet teach the world the simplicity and sweetness of spiritual worship and in the future City of

God she would represent the central shrine from which would rise perennial incense unto the Holy of Holies.

*(The World and the New Dispensation)*

### **Baharat Barshiya Brahma Mandir.**

Benoyendra Nath was a member of the congregation of the Bharat Barshiya Brahma Mandir at Calcutta. For several years he was a member of the Executive Committee of the said congregation and was given the pulpit to preach from on several *Utsava* occasions and conducted regular Sunday services for some time. His sermons have been published in book form (*Arati*) by the Nababidhan Trust.

In connection with this congregation he organised the Theistic Endeavour Society (Church of the New Dispensation) which was in charge of (1) the Theological classes (for the study of *Sreemad-Bhagabad-Geeta*, Bible and other scriptures), (2) The Sunday School for boys and (3) The *Niti Vidyalaya* for girls. Some of his papers at the Theological classes and sermons have also been published by the said Trust. (Lectures Vol. II and III).

Benoyendra Nath used to deliver extra-mural lectures on advanced subjects regularly to ladies (Brahmo and others) who attended in large number, in connection with the Victoria Institution for girls, Calcutta.

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## **CHAPTER IX.**

### **CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE.**

"It was through Protap Chandra Majumdar that Benoyendranath was attracted to the Institute. (Society for the Higher Training of Young Men). In 1895 he joined the Society as an ordinary senior member. His first activity in the Society took this shape. When it was proposed to

change the name of the Society to that of its present name, he was one of the few who sided with Sir Gooroodas Banerjee in opposing this view and made a short speech. But the name was changed in spite of their opposition. Prof. Sen continued to take interest in the affairs of the Institute, freely mixing himself with its student members, giving addresses to the young men, and forming classes to study such religious books as the *Gita* and the *Upanishads*. Thus quietly and unostentatiously he was warming himself up to his work. In 1898 he was made a member of the Executive Committee and in 1900 when Mr. J. N. Das Gupta succeeded the indefatigable Dr. Wilson to the Secretaryship, he was made the Hony. Deputy Secretary. In the year 1900 he gave two lectures, one on the study of the *Upanishads*, and the other on Tennyson's Holy Grail. In this latter, as far as we remember, he tried to justify the quest. He upheld in earnest and sober language the truth and sanctity of the ascetic ideal and maintained that Tennyson intended to commend and not condemn the quest. The quest itself is the pursuit of the ideal. Tennyson's highest teaching is 'Follow the gleam.' The flight of thought and the easy fluency of language and the rich imagery is beyond all description, and we believe would do credit to any English scholar. Professor Sen gave splendid addresses to the Junior Members of the Institute of which mention may be made of the following—

Apology of Socrates, Some Difficulties in Modern Student Life and a Life Sketch of Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore. He was great as a speaker but he impressed even more in his conversation. And the best things he said were all said in offhand talk. Men delighted to listen to him. He could talk and talk but his audience would never be tired. This power of conversation made him a

charming guest in his European and American Tour. 'The Pilgrim' which is a journal of the public and semi-public engagements in the course of his American and European tour in 1905, describes how everywhere he was asked to talk to people about India—her people and her religions and how they were never tired to hear him speak. The great secret of this charm lay in the evident sincerity with which he spoke—every word laying bare the very soul of the speaker, in the great gift of making happy pictures and word portraits and especially in the smiling reposeful manner of the speaker.

As a Professor, his success was greatly due to this, his wonderful power of making his words interesting. Whether it was Logic or History or Economics, that he was teaching, his words always impressed themselves on the hearers, he made abstruse problems as clear as daylight and added life to the dry bones of History. In teaching Greek History he began by asking his class to familiarise themselves with Greek Dramas and their stories. That is the way he told them to get the true perspective and colouring of Greek History. He himself could tell such wonderful tales of the great characters of History; every one will remember his conversation on Venice, on Martin Luther and the Reformation, and on many such historical topics which crept up whenever he could give an hour or so to his beloved friends, the Junior Members of the Institute. One word more about his travels in America. He was frequently questioned about the impression the Niagara Falls had made on his mind. In 'the Pilgrim' he has answered the queries put to him. We cannot withhold the temptation of quoting the lines:—

"People have asked me if I was disappointed at the Niagara Falls. I have found it difficult to answer the question. They are a very striking natural phenomenon,

plain and simple for any man to behold, but what simply appeals to the eye and the ear counts as very little towards the real satisfaction of the soul. The very presence of so many people on the spot—whose every look and movement betrays that they are there as mere sight-seers—acts as a serious disturbance. I wish, I could be there all alone or in the company of one or two chosen friends. The whole thing I know in that case would have a different meaning for me.....

.....If I lived near the Falls I would visit them in the morning and the evening, in Sunlight and Moonlight and Starlight, and ask if all that ceaseless rolling of the waters meant unrest or rest, if the sound that they made wanted to rouse me into action or lull me to sleep; if that unceasing flow meant senseless waste or the inexhaustible abundance and munificence of the storehouse of Nature; if that dance of the rapids meant the writhings and wriggings of a tortured spirit, or indeed the dance of a boundless joy; and above all I would pray that in their presence I might forget all the waters and forget all the sounds and forget all these questionings and “rapt in wonder, worship the Invisible alone.”

Such was the spirit in which he approached great natural phenomena. The sight of a heavy downpour, of any scene of beauty—grand and majestic or humble and delicate, was sufficient to send him into spiritual ecstasies.

Professor Sen continued as the Hony. Deputy Secretary from 1900 to the end of 1906. These seven years were unhappily the darkest in the history of our Institute. In 1899 Dr. Wilson left the Institute in a sound financial condition with 619 members on its roll, full of life and activity. The ground in the Marcus Square was being regularly used by the Football and Cricket Clubs—a portion of it being let out in 1899 to the Calcutta Municipality for

plague work. From 1900 dark days set in. For one thing, Members began to fall off. The Library lost books as fast as they were bought. There was no check, no system whatsoever, either in the Office or the Library. The Representative Committee which really carries on the work of the Institute had very little to do and met only once in two years. The Football and the Cricket Clubs ceased to exist. The boats in the College Square could not be kept in a workable condition and had to be sold off for an infinite fraction of their value. And the worst of all, the Institute was driven out of the Marcus Square—the Square which was meant for them, which was in their legal possession and for which they had spent no less than fifteen thousand rupees. The Square passed into the hands of the Municipality and the Athletic activities of the Institute ceased. The crisis was reached when Sir Archdale Earle, then as the Director of Public Instruction, ordered the Executive Committee to vacate the quarters which they occupied. Mr. J. N. Das Gupta, the Hon'y. Secretary, was preparing to remove the furniture and such books of the Library as remained, to any spot he could find. At this stage Professor Sen took over charge from Mr. Das Gupta, who was transferred to Hoogly and could no more guide the affairs of the Institute.

Let us once more try to realise Professor Sen's position when he assumed charge of the Institute. It was, as we have said, in August, in the beginning of session 1906-07, that he was elected Secretary. The number of Junior Members then was 65. The Library Hall was damp. The floor was unpaved. A few broken tables, some half empty almirahs, many of them with broken locks, a few ugly old patterned gas lamps;—this was the Institute. Students came, played chess, munched betels and went away. There used to be a lecture now and then. Some papers were

subscribed but they were not kept where they should be, sometimes not placed at the table at all. In hot summer days the Assistant Secretary would be found sitting in the office and fanning himself with a hand punkah, very much the worse for use. The Athletic section was dead—a broken Ping Pong table only reminded people of its existence. The Under-Secretaries never met together. Even the Executive Committee met sparingly. Over all this the mandate from the Director was looming large.

With this happy making prospect before him, Professor Sen began work. With the help of Mr. W. C. Macpherson, Sir Andrew Fraser was prevailed upon to call back the Director's mandate. It was arranged that the Institute would not have to leave its present quarters till better or at least as good accommodation could be found for it. The Library Hall was paved and the walls were made as far as possible damp-proof. A neat and decent appearance was somehow made of the whole show. The broken or decayed furniture was removed, and through the kindness of Sir Charles Allen, the Hall and the Reading Room were furnished with bright little Lucas lamps and the ugly old glaring lights were done away with. With the help of Sir Charles again the Marcus Square rights were partially recovered and the Institute was allowed the privileges of an ordinary Club in the ground which it had once substantially helped to make.

The work of reconstruction was thus begun. Our rights to quarters had been vindicated, our rights in the Marcus Square partially restored, the Hall and the Reading Room made to look more business-like, and the Junior Members had also been brought under some sort of co-operative existence. This could not but check the failing popularity of the Institute. Members began to find that the whole thing was not a humdrum affair as it used to be.



A greater interest was created in the activities of the Institution and more members began to join. In the year 1908, i.e., in the second year of his stewardship, Sir Rajendra Nath Mookerjee, always a great friend and well-wisher of the Institute, presented for the use of the Junior Members two little boats. The old Rowing Club was thus revived. In former years Mr. Das Gupta had complained that it was impossible to keep boats in order in this hot climate. The supposed impossibility was overcome by Professor Sen, who took steps to see that the boats were properly cared for and, thanks to his energy, the present crafts have outlived five summers' heat without much damage to themselves or any extravagant expenditure. In order to draw the attention of the students and thereby create greater interest, the new Secretary threw open the Annual Recitation Competition to the public. For the first two years almost in all the functions the public were invited. Courts were opened in College Square for Badminton. The former tennis courts being ruined through neglect, it was not possible to prepare a tennis court again for the heavy initial expenditure which the poverty of Institute Funds then disallowed. Previous to his coming, when the Lawn-tennis Club of the Institute ceased to exist, a complaint was made in the Annual Report that our rights in the College Square were not well defined. Thanks to Sir Charles Allen again, Professor Sen found his way to revive these rights, and once again the devotees of Badminton could freely ply their Battle-dores. The activities of the Institute were displayed now in various ways. Social gatherings, Dramatic Performances, and Literary Evenings were organised. The General and Debate Meetings Section, however, was never very neglected, but still fresh life was put into this department also. The Debate Section waned now and then. But of that,

there were various reasons which it would be out of place to mention here.

In 1908 also, was organised the Students' Fund. The organisation of this Fund was due mainly to Professor Sen, to a handsome donation and a still more handsome promise of future help by the late Professor Harinath De, and also in a large measure to Srijut Aghore Nath Ghosh, Junior Member and the first Under-Secretary in charge of the fund. The fund was started in February 1908. It is a unique organisation in one sense. For the fund is conducted and controlled entirely by Junior Members with the Honorary Secretary as ex-officio President. To this fund Professor Sen gave a great part of his energy and much of his time. The idea was to support the fund by large number of small annual subscriptions from students generally, and with occasional donations here and there from kind-hearted gentlemen. From 1909 a charity performance is held under the auspices of the Fund and this has largely inflated its income. Even in his sick-bed Professor Sen did not forget the Students' Fund. He had helped it all along with donations, subscriptions, time and labour. In November 1912, a few months before his sad demise, he sent a donation of Rupees twenty for himself and his family to the Fund. In the first year of its existence the fund had an income of thirty-five rupees. The last year that closed showed an income of Rupees 1,435. This steady growth of the fund speaks well of its Secretary and the Committee of administration. But every one of them will gladly acknowledge that this spirit of service and this zeal for work they have imbibed from their late lamented chief.

The real work of Professor Sen lay not in the improvement of this or that particular side of the Institute's activity or even in a general and all round improvement

of the Institute itself. His great credit lay in the life which he had infused into the Junior Members. Any resourceful man, could at the sacrifice of a part of his time and with the help of two or three hard-working clerks, do for the Institute what he had done outwardly. But the work of Professor Sen differed from this man's in this, that he had everything done by the Junior Members themselves. He gave a new life into under-graduate existence—into the student members of the Institute. He had brought about a feeling of corporate existence amongst the members, a realisation of a sense of responsibility as members of a common Institution, a sense of unity in the bonds of service and fellowship. It was his object to make every member alive to the great privilege of being allowed to work together in a common cause and to realise the responsibility of taking upon one's self such service. He virtually created the Representative Committee which ceased to exist except on paper when he assumed charge. He knew that the fellowship of common work and common privileges could alone constitute a bond of common interest amongst Junior Members. He tried to make the Under-Secretaries and all Junior Members feel that they had a real share in the work of the Institute which should exist for and because of them. Thus when he called his first batch of student workers, he gave them to understand that they were to be responsible to him for the work assigned to them, that they were to, really, and not nominally, be in charge of departments against their names. He drew up a body of draft rules to guide the Representative Committee, made the Committee meet every month and render an account of their work to their colleagues. Every member was given sufficient liberty to carry on his work, unhampered. The Junior Members also began to meet frequently and criticise the work of

their representatives. They were allowed to ask questions on the working of particular departments and the Under-Secretary in charge, had to satisfy them with his answers. Thus gradually the enthusiasm and interest of members in the activity of the Institute grew as it never had done. The interest that was created might be gauged from the manner in which the members grew in numbers. In the end of 1906 there were 115 Junior Members; by the end of 1907, the figure stood at 129; in December 1908, 248; in December 1909, 414; in December 1910 nearly 545; in 1911 nearly the same; in 1912, 730.

The secret of this success lay in the love and confidence which he inspired in the Student Members. They could do anything for him. The news of his death came to the Junior Members as the greatest piece of ill news they could hear. They felt it as their personal loss. But more of this hereafter. As I have said, Professor Sen trusted the students. He never grudged to leave things to their judgment when once he knew he could rely on his men. As we remember how he loved the Institute and its Members, how much he was prepared to concede to the feelings and opinions of his beloved young friends as he called them, as we remember his words and his behaviour to them in the Representative Committee, in presiding over debate and Junior Members' meetings, in theatrical rehearsals, and in times of work and worry, we can not suppress our tears! What a man was there! Alike masterful and loving, a strict disciplinarian, withal a friend, with infinite sympathy for all the failings of human nature, prepared to pardon every fault, every shortcoming, a visionary, an idealist and yet a perfect business-man, courteous but firm and ever keeping an open mind, he was to us at once our guide and our inspiration. He never thought it beneath his dignity to consult the Junior

Members, he would not think it foolish to argue with them, he would never pass an order till he has convinced us that it should be done. He had never been known to sneer or to laugh at incompetence. If an Under-Secretary brought up the most ludicrous proposal before the Representative Committee, he would not laugh at him out but speak to him gently till he has made his absurdity clear to him and the proposal would at once be withdrawn. We have quarelled with him—not once or twice but many times, but always in the end we remained to pray. We wanted to send resolutions against his vote to the Executive Committee, sometimes we have actually done this but his calm spirit was never disturbed. The same unruffled kindness, the same kind, nay almost generous forgiving spirit, was ever in his soul. It would be well to cite an instance. We wanted to hold a Dicken's centenary. Professor Sen thought that a Dicken's centenary should take the form of a lecture on the great novelist and readings from his works. But we insisted that it should be supplemented by light refreshments. He told us piteously that the funds will not permit it and he could not allow this. We, however, told him that he was much too economical for us and that we should carry our resolution to the Executive Committee, which we did. When we came out from the Committee room he explained to us how with the poor monthly grant of 100 rupees and the very subterraneous subscription it was barely possible to keep the Institute solvent and we felt ashamed that we had sent this resolution against him to the Committee and we had only love and reverence for our chief when we received the rebuff from the Executive Committee by our prayer being rejected.

That he was always open to conviction, will be clear to those who had the privilege of working with him. All

his life was a continual striving for the truth, and even in the smallest things this trait displayed itself. The Hon. Dr. Sarbadhikari has referred to his clipping the objectionable things in the Institute theatricals in his short, brightly written appreciation. In this connection I have something to say as I was connected with nearly all the theatricals in the Institute since the beginning of his stewardship and had a certain responsibility in clipping the objectionable features and getting up the play. When a book was selected for representation the Under-Secretary in charge was asked to clip out objectionable features and go on with the rehearsals. This would be done with the help of some Senior Member who was placed in charge of the performance—for the last four years this used to be Prof. M. N. Basu. Prof. Sen would come in now and then, looked on things and gave his opinion. When he wanted certain things changed he always gave his reasons and they were immediately dropped. Only on two occasions, however, he disagreed from the Junior Members and I am glad to be able to say that on both these occasions we prevailed over him. The contention arose in the first case regarding the retention of certain stage property and in the second case, of a particular song. In both these cases the Junior Members disagreed rather strongly from Professor Sen and wanted to refer the point to a higher authority.

The decision of the Secretary in these cases is final, the question of an appeal could not arise. But Professor Sen was not a person to allow his personal bias to stand against anything that concerned the Institute. Besides, he was far from being one of those who consider themselves infallible. And he allowed the matter to be decided by a third party and what was still more generous when it was decided that the things might be retained, he was

found to be quite as eager as the boys themselves in making the representations of this portion perfect. The great respect and love which he inspired in students who came in contact with him was due to many such sweet traits of character like this. It gives us great pleasure to think that in many cases where we did not think alike we were able to bring him to see eye to eye with us. This openness of mind is rare. It was possible only in Benoyendra Babu.

We shall now resume the narrative of his work in and for the Institute again. Having carried on the organisation to a pitch of perfection, never attained before, he found that without more money the work was hampered in every way. Money was wanted to organise the Athletic department, money was wanted to equip the Library, and money was wanted to keep up the dignity of the Institute in its social and other meetings. The kindness of the Director and his repeated intercession, had secured for the hall a suitable installation of fans and lights. But the blessing was not unmixed, it had meant heavier bills. And there was no very large increase in income. We wanted a magic lantern for lecturing purposes, a musical instrument and many articles of furniture. The inadequacy of the grant was keenly felt. In 1910 April, he sent to the Director a lengthy petition claiming for the Institute an increase in the annual grant and a lump sum grant to enable it to meet, in however small degree, its increased demands. In November of this year again, he sent another letter in which he vindicated in an able and masterly fashion the claim of the Institute to be considered as an educational institution. The Director in his reply to the first letter, had said that as their accounts did not show a deficit, they must explain why they should get a further and increased supply. In reply Professor

Sen pointed out that all their energies had been bent on keeping the Institute solvent. That they had starved all their departments so that they might present a solvent sheet of accounts. That they never expected that insolvency of any public body could be judged as a claim on Government for support. He ended this petition with words which could not fail to impress. Largely as a result of these two communications and largely by the kindness of Sir Harcourt Butler who presided at the annual meeting of 1911 and was greatly impressed with what he saw, the annual grant was eventually doubled and the present grant of two lakhs was made. Regarding this grant of two lakhs by the India Government our thanks are mainly due to Sir Harcourt Butler. But Sir Harcourt Butler would have had no opportunity to witness the work of the Institute if Mr. Gourlay would not have prevailed on him to preside at the annual meeting of 1911. The letters addressed by Professor Sen to the Director had also their effect in bringing about the grant and Mr. Gourlay very kindly referred to Professor Sen's work in this connection, while speaking to the deputation of Junior Members that waited on His Excellency on the 7th March. In fact Professor Sen and Mr. Gourlay were instrumental in obtaining for the Institute this recognition of its work amongst the students of Calcutta. He was not fated to be allowed to make use of the opportunities that were now afforded. What his steadfast zeal, his earnest solicitude and his great love for the Institute had attained, was to be left to other hands to shape.

We have now nearly brought our narrative to a close. At best this sketch has been rambling and justice has not been done to his work or his heart. The task requires a nobler and more capable pen than I can wield but I might plead this in my favour that I have not set down one line



that I did not know to be the fact and that I have not betrayed myself into overstatements.

He fell ill last May. April 1912 had been his last month of activity. From this month the grant had been doubled. How many plans we made together of husbanding our now added resources to the best benefit of the Institute! At the first signs of intestinal disorder it was thought that his recent activity as an Inspector of colleges, which led to a little irregularity in his well regulated life—the constant travelling from place to place, the want of a fixed time for meals, etc., had produced this undesirable effect, which a few months of rest would cure. But there was no sign of abatement. June was over, yet there was no change for the better. He applied for leave from the College and in July sent in his resignation of the Secretaryship of the Institute. Before this the news of the grant of a few lakhs had reached us officially. Even in his sick bed he would always enquire how the Institute was getting on, what steps were being taken to utilise the grant and sent his views on the question. This was his special care. Some of the Junior Members regularly visited him. At this time he was thinking of a change of climate. The terrible pain he had been suffering, had cast its shadows upon his features but not on his mind. He was as cheerful as ever. He talked of his American and Continental experiences, expressed his opinions on the burning questions of the day, discussed religious and philosophical questions and sometimes read with us his favourite books and authors, Wordsworth, Browning, *Gila* and sometimes Shakespeare.

He had a passion for the two most beautiful things on earth—music and flowers. He condemned Wordsworth when he said :—

“To me, the *meanest flower* that blows can give  
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.”

“Mean is not the adjective for a flower” he would say. Fresh blown flowers were his delight and consolation during the large part of his suffering. How greatly he loved to hear songs. He would forget everything, his pain and all as he listened to the sweet strains of music. Babu Jnanpriya Mitra had sung to him on several occasions for hours and hours together but he would never be tired of hearing him. He would make Jnanpriya repeat his favourite songs three or four times. One of his most favourites was Mr. D. L. Roy’s famous song :—

“ওই মহাসিন্ধুর ওপার থেকে কি সঙ্গীত ভেসে আসে।”

The intense spirituality of the man was apparent to whoever talked with him. It was never of the pain he suffered—always of things beyond the sphere of narrow selfishness and bigotry. In August he went to Giridih hoping the salubrious climate would do him good. From Giridih he sent what might be said to be his last message to his beloved Junior Members. We shall quote a few lines from the letter—

“.....To one who is in a state of enforced isolation and idleness like myself, your letter comes as a great comfort to learn that one is still remembered and loved by those who are in the very midst of the joy and enthusiasm of work. How I long to be with you all, or better still, how I wish I could bring you all up here, so as to combine the beauties of this quiet place, the charms of this fine weather, the subtle, vitalising currents in the climate here, with the joys and blessings of companionship with those whom I love as a part of my life! This is

all that I can say about myself. Believe me, no one feels more than myself how otherwise poor my so-called work amongst you, my actual services are !

Let the Institute get on ! Work with all your hearts and all your soul—not for yourselves alone—but for whole generation of youngmen—for several generations perhaps ! The stars look down with their blessings—May you not be found wanting—Be up and doing, be men, *men with souls*, men that will be knowing as the children of God—and raise up your fellow students to be such men : May the blessing of God rest upon you all.”

He returned from Giridih very much worse and when we went to have a look at him, we were surprised at the change. Under Homœopathic treatment he recovered a little but very soon grew worse again and never recovered till he expired peacefully in the very prime of life, at the rather early age of 45 on the 12th April 1912.

The news of his death came to the student community, and especially to the members of the Institute, as a bolt from the sky. In a few hours every one knew what has happened and when it was learnt that the funeral procession would start at 5 p.m. in the evening, the Junior Members decided that they should have his remains brought to the Institute before they were carried to the *ghat*. At about 5-30 the procession, singing one of his favourite songs, entered the Institute then full of students and admirers of Prof. Sen, and the bier was placed in the space between the two Halls. The body was garlanded and two large floral wreaths were placed on the bier. A photograph was taken at this spot. About five hundred students followed the funeral procession and a very large number attended the burning *ghat*. Sir Gooroodas Banerjee, the Hon'ble Dr. Devaprasad Sarbadhikary, Mr. W. C. Wordsworth, Dr. D. N. Mullick, the Hony.

Secretary and the Hony. Deputy Secretary, all followed the bier, including many other distinguished men. Thus the Institute paid its last tribute to his memory.

As we close this sketch of activities, our regrets become all the keener when we think how early he was cut off. If he were left to carry on the work which he had begun, what would we have seen in a few years. But alas! that was not to be. The cruel hand of death snatched him away from us ere his prime. He had only realised what would be his life's work. He was just forming his new programme and at that moment, cruel disease caught hold of him and did not leave till it had killed him. In this poor and miserable land, where almost every organisation languishes from want of workers, the loss of Benoyendra Nath is not easily replaced.

We have no doubt the Senior and Junior Members of the Institute will leave no stones unturned to raise a memorial of him. But whatever might be the magnitude and greatness of the tribute paid to his memory, a true memorial of Benoyendra Nath will be in raising an ideal Institution, the ideal which he aimed at—a perfectly organised body of students united in bonds of social service, working with and for one another—in the debating society, in the athletic fields, in organising entertainments and in administering the Students' Fund.

Let his spirit hover round us, guiding and animating us in whatever we undertake, upholding us in moments of despair, putting fresh life into us whenever we begin to lag and ever proving "a light and an echo unto eternity.

(S.B.—*Calcutta University Magazine*, April, 1913).

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## CHAPTER X.

## HIS LAST DAYS.

After his return from the continental tour, Benoyendra Nath engaged himself in the works of the Brahmo Somaj and of the Calcutta University Institute. His activities in these two spheres have been described in the previous two chapters. His third brother Rajendra Nath, was then working as a Professor in the Jagannath College at Dacca. Benoyendra arranged to send him to England for further study and thus to better his prospects. Thus in 1908, Rajendra Nath sailed for England and there he engaged himself in the study of Chemistry in the University of Leeds. Here, he obtained the degree of M.Sc. and distinguished himself in the research work of Tinctorial Chemistry with Prof. Green. In 1910, he returned home after securing an appointment as the Professor of Tinctorial Chemistry (a Chair newly created for him by the Government of India) at the Shibpur Engineering College, Howrah. Thus he could not meet his father alive who died in December, 1909.

Rajendra Nath married the daughter of Dr. Paresh Nath Chatterjee of Bankipore in 1911.

Benoyendra Nath, in the absence of the father, had to make all the arrangements for this great festivity as the head of the family. In 1911, he acted as Inspector of Colleges, Calcutta University. In June 1911, Benoyendra Nath was blessed with the gift of a girl, his only daughter. There were great rejoicings in the family on the happy occasion. In December, His Majesty the King Emperor George V. with Queen Mary graciously visited India. An address of welcome was presented to Their Majesties by

the Calcutta University and Benoyendra Nath was one of the members who were in charge of the function. In January 1912, the *Namkaran* (naming)' ceremony of his daughter and the son of his brother Satyendra was performed with great *eclat*, the girl was named Annapurna and the boy Sudhindra Nath by him.

April, 1912, was the last month\* of his activity. In May he fell ill. Whilst working as Inspector of Colleges in the latter half of the previous year, there were some irregularities in the routine of his daily life—travelling from place to place, want of any fixed time for meals and frequent changes in his dietary in different places—these all told upon his dyspeptic constitution and produced marked digestive disorders with some intense, obscure pain in the stomach. Medical help was sought for and it was hoped that within the college vacation period, he would recover and be fit for work. But there was no sign of abatement. At the end of June when the College opened after the long vacation, he could hardly resume his duties and so applied for leave of absence from the college work. He became bed-ridden. The pain increased and he became weaker and weaker daily. The nature of the disease (abdominal) was obscure and could not be correctly diagnosed. He was advised to go to England for proper treatment. His younger brother, Dr. Satyendra Nath, was to accompany him and obtained leave of absence from the Provincial Medical Service ; he offered to bear all the expenses. But some of the medical men who were attending Benoyendra thought the voyage hazardous on the rough sea (July) in his weak condition and with an obscure, intense pain in the stomach. Benoyendra Nath, himself, also did not like the idea and so it was given up. In August, he was removed to Giridih, to obtain the benefit of the better

climate there. We quote a letter to a friend written at this time :—

MONDAY,  
*August 12, 1912.*

Loving One, yes, it has been so sweet, all this ministering love and care, and watchful and prayerful concern of friends, since my own body became a Cross, with its perpetual warning to watch and wait for the Call ! It is over three months now, and doctors have been like fathers, brothers, friends, and sweet, angel voices have wafted me on their music wings into visions of beauty and forgetfulness of all pain. Alas, how can I acknowledge and repay all this ? May the Great Love whose ministers they all are, bless them, and make me worthy of them !

Whispers from sickbeds elsewhere also reach me, even on my Cross, particularly from two households,—one, where the suffering one is the sister of M. and my own cousin, the other at Berhampore, where also the suffering one is a cousin of mine. How is she at present ? May God send her comfort and cure through the restoration of her own health as well as that of the little baby whose life throbs as one withers !

To-day at Calcutta, tomorrow morning we set out for Giridih, in search of God's pure air, and the Life that pulsates through the infinite blue spread out like God's own bosom, which one seeks for in vain in drugs swallowed in the damp, stuffy atmosphere of Calcutta.

With love and prayers,

Yours affly.,  
B—

At the beginning, this change of climate with the Homeopathic medicines advised by Dr. Paresh Nath Chatterjee did some good to him. But, alas, they failed

again and his sufferings became more and more intensified and wasting commenced in rapid earnest. At the earnest request of Brother Prasanta Kumar, the most loving medical friends, Dr. Matilal Mukerjee, Rai Bahadur, Dr. Nil Ratan Sircar, Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy, (Dr. R. L. Dutt could not come on account of old age) who were in attendance on him whilst in Calcutta, kindly went over with Prasanta Kumar and Satyendra Nath to Giridih with the definite object of persuading him to undertake the journey to England for treatment (probably operation). But these earnest, kind efforts did not succeed. Benoyendra Nath was desponding in his heart, and he would not leave his motherland, his old mother, his loving wife and children, brothers and sisters, nay not even his near and dear friends for a foreign land with the remotest hope of a cure. He asked his brother Satyendra to *charter a ship* whereon all his near and dear ones might sail with him and go to a land of foreigners, and if the inevitable would come—yea, he was so sure about it—he would meet the same, surrounded by all who are one in love and faith with him. He would urge all around him to sing Mr. D. L. Roy's National Anthem oft and on—

“ধন ধাতু পুষ্পভরা আমাদের এই বহুধরা,  
তাহার মাঝে আছে দেশ এক সকল দেশের সেরা ;  
সে যে স্বপ্ন দিয়ে তৈরী সে যে স্মৃতি দিয়ে ঘেরা,  
এমন দেশটী কোথাও খুঁজে পাবে নাক তুমি,  
সকল দেশের রাণী সে যে আমার জন্মভূমি ।”

—putting great stress on the lines

“সেই দেশেতে জন্ম আমার সেই দেশেতেই মরি ।”

Above all, he most trustfully uttered that it was not the will of the One Whom he always sought prayerfully in



## BENOYENDRA NATH SEN

times of doubt and despair, that the journey should be undertaken, and against that Will he would not stir, even if desired by the whole world.

Thus the idea was given up and as he grew worse and worse, he returned home in a more dilapidated condition. It was about this time that his fifth brother, Debendra Nath, who was working as a Professor at the Krishnagar College, married the only daughter of the late Bhupendra Nath Mozoomdar (one of the sons of the late Rev. Bhai Dina Nath Mozoomdar). Benoyendra Nath could just bless the Happy Pair from his sick bed. Homeopathic treatment was renewed. It was of no avail. Electric treatment was adopted without any effect. The question of operation (opening out the abdomen and removing the malignant mass, for at this time, it could be distinctly felt) was discussed by the eminent surgeons of the town but was abandoned. He was placed under some of the best Kabirajes but alas, nothing could give him relief, all efforts were in vain. No cure, no abatement or relief even, from the agonising pain which was constantly eating him up. He was reduced to skin and bone. The body, the flesh thus succumbed to the ailments but the mind, the spirit conquered all, thrived, grew in depth and width, as he heard the call from the other side of the ocean of life and obeyed most submissively the Heavenly summons and like the crew of the great Titanic, sang the solemn hymn, "Nearer, my God! Nearer to Thee."

With the son of God on the Cross in his front, with the loving face of his most beloved Minister over his head and with the Great Comforter enthroned within his heart he suffered most meekly, nay he fought most bravely the last fight on this side of the world.

Flowers, hymns, prayers, yea, the sweet faces of his near and dear ones, all surrounded him and comforted him in this awful strife. Faith and trust in the all-abiding Mercy and Love enabled him to become victorious at the end and His loyal servant was crowned with the laurel of glory and triumph.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### OBITUARY.

Prof. Benoyendra Nath Sen passed away at 2-45 a.m. on Saturday, the 12th April at his residence at 41, Mechuabazar Street, Calcutta. After a period of protracted illness, the "Pilgrim," as he loved to call himself, came to his journey's end, conscious and "peace-fully" to the last. At 5 p.m. after a short divine service, his body was carried to the burning ghat, where the last rites were performed and the pyre was lighted at 8-45 p.m. A very large procession followed his body to the cremation ground consisting of men of all classes and creeds, students as well as men of light and leading.

"They bore him to the burning ghat, men of all sects and creeds, old and young, pupils, colleagues, friends, on a bier, bedecked with flowers and evergreens. It was veritably a triumphal procession so numerous attended, drawn together by the magic of his personality and the hymn sung all the way—breathing such a spirit of Hope.

One might, almost, have felt, as the last rites were being performed, the faithful, loving soul addressing the friends ranged round the funeral pyre, more or less in the same terms in which he addressed them from England in December, 1905 :—

“To all dearly-beloved friends who wish me Godspeed when I stand ready to undertake this distant pilgrimage, I extend my cordial loving greetings. They are not men belonging to any one particular denomination, or party, or part of the country. There are amongst them leaders of orthodox Hindu society, and of the native Christian community, my respected colleagues (Indian and European), and my beloved pupils in college, as well as representative members of all the sections of the Brahmo Somaj—the body that I belong to—and all those, young and old, with whom I have worshipped God together in the Church of the New Dispensation.”

On that occasion he added :—

“Unto all these, in the course of my travels, in moments of great uplifting and enthusiasm, as well as when I have felt most lonely and depressed, hath my soul turned often and often ; and may it be my privilege, whether I be at home or abroad, to pray for, labour for, and serve each and all of these, so long as life lasts !”

These words uttered then in all sincerity have a deep spiritual meaning for us all.

The very last sermon he preached from the pulpit of the Mandir—in April, 1912—was on the late Pares Ranjan Roy. As it had been previously arranged that he should conduct the usual Sunday service on that day, he could not attend the funeral of Pares Ranjan, which was taking place, even when the sermon was being preached. All these circumstances moved Benoyendra, who loved Pares Ranjan as a younger brother, greatly. And the service

and the sermon gave one an insight into his deeply emotional nature and spiritual vision. Probably, on that occasion, he was at his best—soaring away, and taking his hearers with him, into that super-consciousness that sees nought but union between Life and Death, the world of phenomena and that which lies beyond! It was, we believe, the last of a series of services which he had been asked to undertake and all hoped that the series would be repeated soon. A few days after, the painful illness declared itself, which has ended so fatally.

Another notable performance of his—also in April, last year, was his English Service and sermon on the loss of the *Titanic*, at the Bharatvarshiya Brahma Mandir, at which a collection was made for the sufferers.

At that service he took for his Lesson, that glorious hymn the refrain of which “Nearer, my God, to Thee,” the Band of the *Titanic* struck up when all hope was gone and was playing as the vessel went down! Benoyendra was deeply moved by the singular appropriateness of the hymn, to the occasion. Who would have imagined, then that he would so soon, find in it the only relief from sufferings which no earthly medicine could minister unto!

“Nearer, my God, to Thee,

Nearer to Thee:

E’en though it be a Cross

That raiseth me,

Still all my song would be,

Nearer, my God, to Thee,—

Nearer to Thee!

Though, like the wanderer,

The sun gone down,

Darkness be over me,

My rest a stone,

Yet in my dreams I’d be

Nearer, my God, to Thee,—  
Nearer to Thee !  
There let the way appear  
Steps unto Heaven ;  
All that Thou sendest me  
In mercy given ;  
Angels to beckon me  
Nearer, my God, to Thee,—  
Nearer to Thee !  
Then with my waking thoughts,  
Bright with Thy praise,  
Out of my stony griefs,  
Bethel I'll raise ;  
So by my woes to be  
Nearer, my God, to Thee,—  
Nearer to Thee !"

The sermon was preached, only a few days before he took to bed. Recalling the incidents connected with the loss of the *Titanic*, one cannot help dwelling on their pathetic significance in relation to the recent catastrophe. For some hours at least, before the vessel made its fatal plunge, those on the sinking ship for whom boat accommodation could not be found knew that they were going. Many of them calmly awaited the moment—one remembers how Benoyendra commends their fortitude and faith. Who knew then, that he would have to show much greater fortitude and faith, so soon after ! For we know he apprehended for some months previously and knew, for certain, for more than a month that he could not recover. Latterly, in fact, he had expressed a desire not to be examined by doctors, and would not speak, even if he could. He was preparing himself, even as the men on the *Titanic*, whom he admired so much, under the refrain of "Nearer, my God, to Thee" to leave his home, his family,

his friends, whom he loved so well—even his beloved Motherland for his Father's home !

And as one follows in his mind's eye the various steps of tragedy that ended in the loss of the *Titanic* and hundreds of lives, or that which ended on Saturday last, after twelve months during which life was slowly ebbing away, one cannot help being impressed with the fact that there cannot be any real discontinuity. The aspect changes, light fades from mortal view but that which is never ceases to be !

“He is gone. Gone to his Father, must now be the answer of those who knew him. Only forty-five, and we shall no more look upon that noble face.” So wrote the late Rev. C. H. A. Dall, when Keshub Chandra Sen died. And, now, just thirty years after, one naturally re-calls these words, so singularly applicable to one of his most faithful disciples. Benoyendra Nath Sen is gone—gone to join the Master, to follow in whose footsteps was his constant longing—after having shown during months of constant, unspeakable agony a patience and resignation that recalls the last days of Keshub Chandra Sen and is vouchsafed only to the blessed few. In fact, those who came to see him or watched by his bedside, knew only from stray words and signs how agonising his pain was. There was a calm exterior, in spite of it all, a look at the picture of the suffering Christ which hung on the wall, a muttered prayer for strength to bear up, an occasional remark that the pain literally broke the bones, alone giving one a momentary insight into the suffering heart within. It was a crucial test of faith to which he was called upon to submit himself during the last twelve months and the manner in which he acquitted himself—his heroic submission to the Divine Will—has made, to us who deeply mourn his loss,

the pathos of his early death suffused with a divine glow of inspiration that, let us hope, shall endure for ever !

*(The World and the New Dispensation).*

### Letters

FROM

H. R. JAMES, ESQ.,

Principal, Presidency College,

*Calcutta, the 12th April, 1913.*

DEAR—

I do, indeed, grieve that I shall never welcome your brother back to the College, nor even see him as I saw him last—in bodily weakness and pain, but with the spirit shining through.

There will be sorrow throughout the whole college, when the news become known.

You know without my saying it that you and your brothers have my sincere sympathy—all of you who are stricken with this loss.

I greatly desire that I might follow with you this afternoon to the burning *ghat* and share in the service first. I find that I am unable to. With very kind regards.

\* \* \* \* \*

FROM

J. G. CUMMING, ESQ.,

Camp Bangaon, 4, Theatre Road,

*Calcutta, 13th April, 1913.*

MY DEAR—

Although I had been warned that the case of Babu Benoyendra Nath Sen was hopeless, the news of his death came as a shock when it did come. Pray accept my

sincere condolence on the loss of your brother,—of one who had high ideas and a high standard of duty, who was looked upon as a pattern by the student community upon whom he exercised so much influence for good.

\* \* \* \* \*

FROM

SIR GOOROODAS BANERJEE,

Narikeldanga,

*Calcutta, 12th April, 1913.*

DEAR—

I am extremely grieved to learn the sad news of the untimely death of Professor Benoyendra Nath Sen. In him Bengal has lost a profound scholar, a diligent worker for his country's good, a devoted friend of the student community and a truly good and pious man. May Heaven grant you and the other members of his bereaved family strength to bear with patience this severe affliction. I fear my health may not permit me to perform the melancholy duty of following Professor B. N. Sen's remains to the burning ghat. (*Sir Gooroodas did kindly follow the remains from the house to the University Institute*).

\* \* \* \* \*

FROM

G. W. KUCHLER, ESQ.,

The Observatory, Alipore,

*April 13, 1913.*

DEAR—

I was very distressed to hear of the death of your brother, though of course I knew that all hope of his recovery had been given up for some time.



He was a most noble character, and his death is a great loss to the community, almost irreparable to the students of the Calcutta University in whose interests he had worked so hard. Personally I deplore the loss of a friend whom I wish I had had more opportunities of meeting.

With my sincere sympathies for you and yours in your bereavement.

\* \* \* \* \*

FROM

A FRIEND,

Berhampore, E. B. S. R.,

*15th April, 1913.*

MY DEAR—

The end of what appeared to be a terrible disease has come at last, and all the pain which he bore so patiently is over now.

The voice which acted as a spell upon those who came to listen to him is now hushed for ever. That look of his which communicated gentleness and peace and love is now drawn away for good.

It was a great privilege to have seen him in closer relations during the short time he was here. The memory of those days comes back to me laden with fragrance of his sweet nature, and the music of his voice returns to me in the many songs he used to sing.

Now is the time to meditate upon the richness of that life. He leaves us a heritage of which any age and any nation would be proud. He makes us partakers of his glory. He beckons us to follow in his footsteps.

The little world in which we live will be the poorer because our beloved one is no more. The light of the home is put out. The angel of a mother is left to mourn over her darling's loss and a dear wife made desolate in the absence of a husband that falls to the lot of a few.

Let me hope that a mother's presence will continue to keep you all in good spirits in the loss of B.

### Telegrams.

Have heard with greatest regret of death of your brother and my friend Benoyendra. Please convey to family sincerest sympathy.

DARJEELING.

GOURLAY,

*Private Secretary to*

*His Excellency the Governor of Bengal.*

\* \* \* \* \*

Overwhelmed with grief ; sincere, heart-felt condolence to bereaved mother, sorrowing widow and you all.

May God grant you all the consolation you need and strength to bear the heavy cross.

KUCH BEHAR.

PRIYA NATH GHOSH.

\* \* \* \* \*

My widowed heart wails with you crying to Holy Comforter. Faith whispers he is not dead but lives in the Lord *Sachchidananda Hari*.

LAHORE.

VASWANI.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Navabidhan* Brotherhood join you in tears and prayers.  
Beloved Benoyendra's loss irreparable.

LAHORE.

*Brahma Kripahi Kevalam.*

\* \* \* \* \*

The Sradh Ceremony (The first Memorial Service) was performed on Sunday the 27th April 1913 at 41, Mechua Bazar Street, Calcutta, in accordance with the rites laid down in the *Naba Sanmhita*. It was largely attended by almost all the friends and relations of the family as well as by the many colleagues, admirers and pupils of Benoyendra Nath. The Divine Service commenced with the singing of hymns (Kirtans) led by the Rev. Bhai Ashutosh Roy early in the morning at about 7-30 a.m. The ashes placed in an urn were conveyed from the bed-room into a small room on the terrace of the building where rested the remains of his father under a marble monument and these were put under a similar one. The Rev. Bhais Troylokya Nath Sannyal and Kanti Chundra Mitra officiated as ministers on the occasion. Suitable readings from various scriptures were read out by the Rev. Bhais Brojogopal Niogy and Promotho Lall Sen. The choir were led by Mrs. Hem Kusum Mallik and Sushoma Sen. The chief mourner's prayers were made by the widowed wife and the first two brothers. After the benediction and the last hymn the following donations were announced :—

Misson Fund (New Dispensation Church) for				
cloth	...	...	...	Rs. 30/-
Misson Fund (Sadharan Brahmo Somaj) for				
cloth	...	...	...	„ 20/-
Bramho Relief Fund for rice	..	...	„	20/-
Albert Victor Hospital for rice	...	...	„	10/-

Calcutta Hindu Orphanage for rice	...	Rs.	10/-
The Refuge for rice	... ..	„	10/-
Lee Memorial Home for rice	... ..	„	10/-
Calcutta Mahomedan Orphanage for rice	...	„	10/-
Baidya Nath Leper Asylum for rice	...	„	10/-
Sunday School (New Dispensation Church) for educational articles	... ..	„	10/-
Sunday School (Sadharan Brahmo Somaj) for educational articles	... ..	„	10/-
Workingmen Institute for educational articles		„	10/-
Deaf and Dumb School	do. do. ...	„	10/-
Blind School	do. do. ...	„	10/-
Servants	... ..	„	20/-
For distribution—			
Portraits	... ..	1000	copies.
The Pilgrim	... ..	500	„
Banished from home	... ..	500	„

\* \* \* \* \*

“They stood last Sunday in the room, which he loved so well that he would not leave it in spite of its inconveniences—to the last—around the now-empty-bed, on which they had placed flowers and garlands, singing the Glory of God. As one looked around the room and recalled the many long years during which it had been associated with the uniqueness of his personality, one could not but feel that it was—veritably filled with the aroma of his presence—it was impossible to feel that such sweetness and poetry, such depth and richness of soul could ever possibly cease to be! They tell us, nothing is lost, neither matter nor energy. And such a rare manifestation of Divine Energy indescribably profound, yet inevitably felt, how can it do otherwise than grow evermore. But such arguments

were unnecessary. His presence was a felt-reality to us all.

\* Then came the highly human ceremony of conveying the ashes, by the brothers to an urn over which a tablet will be placed later on. The pathos of it! That,—all that human love could do—having utterly failed, it should in its utter helplessness in the presence of the supreme mystery of life and death, try literally to catch at a straw and when apparently all is lost, to retain a handful of ashes!

But all is not lost: soon the Heavenly strain strikes up and they sing: "In Life, as in Death, Thou art ever near," and we realize that borne by the New Faith, the human soars easily up to the Divine and Benoyendra's soul bears us company as we solve the mystery of Death in ecstatic vision. The whole service is one song of glory—of thanksgiving—for he is not dead but liveth: and do we not now know him more intimately than ever before and is not all for the best in the beneficent dispensation of Providence?

Another hymn—one he particularly loved to hear—deeply in unison with his own yearning soul. The call from beyond the Deep is never ceasing,—a call of love, sweet and fragrant—to whom there is neither death nor suffering! And now that he has responded to the call, there was none in that gathering of mourners that did not join in the widow's piteous appeal for grace that she might find solace in spiritual companionship. She, poor soul, had often trembled that her portion in life had been so blissful, for who, so fortunate, as the wife of Benoyendra Nath Sen! And now face to face with the supreme mystery of so much bliss, so soon snatched away, she prayed for Light, that we may be sure shall ever illumine her path!

And the brothers. In the course of a few short years the family which the prayerful solicitude of a man of the New Faith built up, and the spiritual force of the eldest brother knit together, find themselves deprived of both father and brother. What wonder that they should feel oppressed with a sense of this overwhelming burden. We know how anxious Benoyendra was to the last for the family whose spiritual welfare was his constant solicitude. Who can doubt but that his prayers were joined to his brothers' for strength and peace that they need so much?

And while the prayers from the chief mourners were being offered, there was another prayer that if left unsaid was no less in all lips. There is the void in the home, in the hearts of mother, wife, relations, and friends, but there is the void in the community. How will this void be filled up? Who will do the work that Benoyendra could have done, that we had all felt, Benoyendra had been appointed to do? Mingled with a sense of personal loss, that all felt, was the deep sense of loss to the community—and the prayer of all, was the prayer of the last hymn—"If unspeakable is our grief, Thou Art Good, All shall be fulfilled in the fulness of time." (*The World and the New Dispensation*, 1913).

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## CHAPTER XII.

### IN MEMORIAM

SRIJUT T. L. VASWANI.

Is it possible to believe that he is passed behind the Veil? The end appeared to be inevitable, yet all things are possible to the Lord; so believe I; and in that belief I prayed day after day for his recovery. From more than one I gleaned with loving solicitude some news of his

state ; from more than one travelled to me the message of love ;—the message which he sent with tears in his eyes ; my heart flamed with longing for his *darshanand*. I was waiting for the Summer Vacation to go down to dear Calcutta and receive the blessings of the saint. But yesterday, Calcutta committed his body to the purifying flames of the 'Burning Ghat' ; and now till I, too, have crossed the bar I can but look for him in the hallowed chamber of the heart and miss

“The touch of a vanished hand  
and the sound of a voice that is still”.

Years ago, in my native place—Hyderabad—I heard of him ; I had just passed the Matriculation Examination and I wished to join the University of Calcutta ; I hoped to have the privilege of being a pupil of Prof. Benoyendra Nath Sen. My hopes were not realised ; years passed away and destiny brought me to Calcutta in a different capacity. My first public utterance was at the University Institute ; my subject was “The Genius of the Hindu Race”. Prof. Benoyendra Nath Sen was in the chair ; for the first time I saw the man in his *stately simplicity* ; for the first time I heard his *musical voice*. Soon after, I met him at his place ; on the carpet in his room we sat together, he talking to me of many things bearing upon Faith and Culture. Modestly and with quiet dignity he spoke of the missionary vocation of the teacher ; he spoke of the teacher as enjoying exceptional opportunities to win the young to the way of virtue and faith ; he regarded the teacher's office as being no less sacred than that of the preacher ; he realized the truth that education was a thing of the spirit.

I heard him at the Albert Hall ; it was a memorable occasion ; he was about to go to Europe to represent the

Brahmo Samaj at the International Conference at Geneva ; his friends and admirers had met together to wish him God-speed ; a pupil of his was weeping ; I know of none else loved so ardently by his pupils ; he carried with himself an atmosphere of graciousness and heart-love to which students are always responsive ; his speech that evening was a further disclosure of the man—his modesty, his spontaneity ; his faith, his reverence for the *soul* of the West, his loyalty to the Mother-land, his personal glowing love for the Church of the *Navavidhan*. My memory travels to the day—it was Wednesday, the last one perhaps of March 1906—when I stood with many others at the Howrah Station to receive the benedictions of the “Pilgrim” returning from the West. As he stood on the platform, receiving and returning greetings it seemed his body bore but little traces of his labours in distant lands. The joy of meeting friends had subdued all fatigue. We proceeded to his house. Revered Kanti Chunder Mitter—that veteran Apostle—unwearied in the service of the Church and Prof. Sen’s father offered prayers. In the evening, a special service was held. Revered Trailokyanath Sanyal—the Singing Apostle of the Church—led the service. I listened attentively to the talk which Prof. Sen gave after the service was over. How feelingly he spoke of the kindness and love and fraternal fellowship he had enjoyed during the period of his stay among Unitarians in Europe and America, and I know how feelingly Rev. Evans, Editor of the *Christian Life*, London, spoke to me of “Prof. B. N. Sen.” To know him was to feel the impress of his wonderful sweetness of disposition and his serene spirituality.

How many things shall I fetch from the book of my memory? Socrates said his best things in the “Dialogues”, Benoyendra Nath Sen (and he spoke beauti-



fully of Socrates more than once) said his best things in prayers and sermons. I heard him once at the Bharatvarshiya Brahma Mandir ; he spoke in Bengali : I do not know that language, but I could follow the general drift of his discourse. He spoke with tremulous emotion, many were visibly affected. I burst into tears. The meeting over, I followed him along the path which leads from the Mandir to his house ; I felt a strong impulse to touch his feet, he was too modest to allow me to act according to my impulse. At Calcutta, in England, in Sind, and here at Lahore have I met his friends and admirers ; some of them I have met ; they all would say that Benoyendra Nath Sen was an effective speaker ; but the secret of speech was the man ; when he spoke he transmitted soul-energy ; something—part of the great passion of his soul went out of him and brought his hearers within the circle of his uplifting and enthusiasm.

He loved the young ; in them he recognised the true kinsmen of his soul ; he kindled in them the devotion and reverence which in ancient *Aryavarta* the pupils had for the teacher whom they regarded as their *Guru*. He loved India ; not many know perhaps that he did much to shape the "Oxford India Society," and in England and America he spoke on subjects such as "Indian Educational Problems," "Present-day currents of Religious thought in India," "India and the Brahma Samaj," "Indian Literature," "the Hindu Ideal of Womanhood." A delegate of the Brahma Samaj, he also spoke as an Apostle of India ; he believed in the New Synthesis, the higher harmony of East and West ; and his message the "Pilgrim's Message" in his own words we reproduce elsewhere.

The long-continued and agonising illness to which he succumbed on the Hindu New Year's Day showed the

rich spiritual resources of our lofty leader; years ago he wrote the following in the course of an article on "The spirit of sacrifice":—

"What even if thou diest without a murmur or diest by a slow long continued process at every step of which thou acceptest with a meek resignation the pain of the long-foreseen-end?" The words well describe his own state; he long foresaw the end; he suffered by a slow long-continued process; he murmured not; he accepted his agonies, hour after hour how with a meek resignation. The original force of his character and his serene conviction of immortality were conspicuous to all who saw him accepting the agonising pain as a benediction from the Divine Mother. The root of resignation is Faith—Faith in the All-Love. Benoyendra Nath Sen was a man of faith; he lived a life hidden in God. God was the centre of his gravity; his soul-life rested on God-communion. The balance, sanity, and universality of his outlook upon the problems of thought and life had their source in daily communion with the Unseen. He lived and not simply preached the ideal of the *Navavidhan*—the ideal which calls us to consecrate our lives to the service of the *Truth above party*. He bore witness to the *supra-sectarian* character of the New Dispensation. As he expressed it himself in a lecture on "The Spirit and Principles of the New Dispensation," "The New Dispensation emphatically declares that it is not one more sect added to the numerous sects and denominations already existing; because it claims essentially to be the religion of Harmony, the Dispensation which recognises the providential character of and indeed is itself the fulfilment of all other Dispensations in the fulness of time. It is not confined to any one country or people, its prophets are to be found in America and Europe as well as in India. Keshub Chandra Sen

himself made only the modest claim of being one of its Apostles; though as the Gospel which he preached comes to be more deeply appreciated and the idea of the Church which he represented comes to be more fully realised, his own singular position in relation to both will as a matter of course become distinctly recognisable."

I entertain a hope that his writings and utterances will be brought together in a volume; such a volume may well be our one little love-offering to him. Such a volume too, will show the dominant idea of the man. He wrote years ago a paper on "Keshub and the Inward vision" and it is the truth of *Inward Religion—the Religion of Communion and Character*—which shines in all his writings. That truth gave him a luminous insight into literature and his commentary on Tennyson's "Holy Grail" was regarded as the best by Miss Weld—a niece and a great admirer of the Poet-Laureate. That truth gave him insight into Philosophy and Theology; it is not easy to forget what I experienced when I heard his lecture on "World-Vision," a lecture in which he showed how in the East the ideal was to see the Universe in and through God, how in the West the ideal was to realize God through the World and how men of the New Dispensation were to unite the two ideals in their lives.

There is a beautiful passage he wrote on "The Niagara Falls" and I reproduce it because it illustrates so beautifully his dominant idea: the *Soul's cry for communion with the Unseen Spirit*. "If I lived near the Falls I would visit them in the morning and the evening, in sunlight and moonlight and ask if all that ceaseless rolling of the waters meant rest or unrest, if the sound that they made wanted to rouse me to action or lull me to sleep, if that unceasing flow meant senseless waste or the inexhaustible abundance and munificence of the store-

house of Nature, if that dance of the rapids meant the writhings and wriggings of a tortured spirit, or indeed the dance of a boundless joy; and above all I would pray that in their presence I might forget all the waters and all the sounds and forget all their questionings and 'rapt in wonder, worship the Invisible alone'."

But the man was greater than all his writings; what Schlegel said of Lessing may well be said of this saint of the Samaj: "He himself was of more worth than all his talents; in his individuality lay his greatness". He called himself a "Pilgrim," and he has sped to the shrine of the One Whom he loved and served; I know not when the void due to his passing from our midst will be filled. The sweet reasonableness, the quiet spirituality, the broad outlook, the inward vision associated with his blessed life are his rich legacy to his Church. O! brothers of the Brahmo Samaj! the life of this saint calls us to a new sense of service. Shall the Church be busy still with theologic squabbles and sectarian strifes? Ah! then must hope despair! Or shall the Church charged with a new enthusiasm become One Fellowship of Service unto the Glory of God? Then indeed shall the Brahmo Samaj be blessed and India shall be reborn. How many are ready to respond to the Call of Benoyendra's life? He spoke of the New Dispensation as the "*reawakening of the soul*." How many are prepared to live the lofty Ideal of the *Navavidhan*? When the news of his passing away came to me yesterday, I lay prostrate in grief; I sighed and cried and prayed; but ere the shadow of the evening fell I seemed to hear the music of his Voice calling me to a solemn re-dedication of my life to the Lord. Five years and more have passed away since I left Calcutta; and on the night proceeding the morn when I was to leave that land of song and worship and Idealism, he came to my

little room at 82 and I had his blessings ; he renews them now from behind the Veil.

“They do not die,  
Nor lose their mortal sympathy,  
Nor change to us.”

He calleth me and you and all who love the Church to a new consecration to the sacred cause. “To suffer unto victory—to die unto eternal life—that is the glory of man.” So he wrote some years ago: he himself suffered unto victory, and he has died unto eternal life. He has bequeathed a great enthusiasm ; he calls us to the life of communion and consecration. Not finished yet thy labours, beloved brother, though passed beyond the Veil is thy immortal soul ; and I, who loiter still within the Veil, I fain would keep the faith, I fain would hold the hope in all my loneliness that we shall meet again at the Shrine where shines the Light and breathes the benediction of the Beauty that is God.

*(The World and The New Dispensation, 1913).*

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SIR DEVAPRASAD SARBADHICARY.

I knew him long—not very long, how long I cannot recall to mind. Man and boy he had entered into my life and thoughts and the impression to-day is as if I had known him always. Five or six years my junior, we had never actually come together in academic life. But we knew and watched one another from a distance for we had come under the same influences early and late, influences as are conjured up by names such as Ram Tanu Lahiry, Keshub Chander Sen, Fletcher Williams and Gurudas Banerjee. He personified and embodied in himself the

luckily growing type of unaggressive, unobtrusive, non-militant and tolerant catholicity that knows how to stand its own peculiar ground, yet assist in the expanding social and spiritual solidarity of an advanced order, that is being fast, unostentatiously but sure enough, evolved into no uncertain and no unwelcome a shape.

And the mass of mournful yet resigned humanity that followed his flower-bedecked remains from point to point of his varied public career, on Saturday last, to their ultimate earthly destination, gave some indication of the man and his work. Brahmos and Christians, Mussalmans and Hindoos all were there, hundreds of ardent and young aspirants for life's good things, staid business men, dignified departmental heads and resigned ministers of religion. And with them—I shall not say at their head—Sir Gurudas Banerjee, on foot, wearily trudging along the hot, dusty, crowded and, at points dangerous road, type of the best product of modern and cultured Hindoo orthodoxy, supremely oblivious of everyday Hindoo conventionalities of the situation, who inspite of three day's illness and fast would not keep away from the discharge of the duty of paying his last tribute of respect to the memory of the Man, his worth and his work.

Eloquent and natural tribute this. Look again to the darkened blinds of the University Institute Hall where had been arranged an absolutely Hindu meeting in honor of a saintly aristocrat, a long-standing engagement for which elaborate preparations had been made and to postpone which was worse than loss and inconvenience. The promoters with due accord gave up their congratulating demonstration and freely mingled their tears with those of the numerous mourners, as the *Cortege* in its sublime and awful simplicity came up the sombre aisles. There is hope alike for the Brahmo and the Hindoo yet.

And a Mussalman meeting the next day that had gathered for business of a different kind gave unstinted expression to genuine sorrow. Members of the educational service in both its branches, Imperial and Provincial, in their social gathering at the Calcutta Club on Saturday night in honor of the Hon'ble Mr. Kuchler must have had more than a kind word for and more than a passing reference to a colleague whose worth and work they always appreciated and admired. They knew that he was not one of those who do not seek to earn a valuable reputation by setting up a high standard of conduct for other people.

The Brahmo Somaj of India, the University Institute, the Presidency College with the University Buildings at the not distant background, where inexorable daily routine work was proceeding withal—and the Sadharan Brahmo Somaj had their last look of the devotee that had given them of his best and the bier fittingly rested awhile at these points of punctuation of his life of many-sided and fruitful activities. Intense and unfeigned sorrow was the prevailing note of every gathering along the route.

The pinched features,—gaunt, sunken, hollow and tense—told the tale of awful suffering of long eleven months. These he bore with calm, patient, placid, almost stated heroism. All the known forms of medical treatment had failed to diagnose his disease or to afford him relief. But he never complained; whenever I called I always found him cheerful and almost hopeful in his supreme faith in the Giver of All-Good. He knew what his Doctors would not tell him and he was ready to meet his Maker at all times. His one objection was to die away from home, for the dear old mother's sake, for the sake of the devoted wife and brothers who almost worshipped him. A better son, father, husband, brother and friend never lived and there was the fullest reciprocity of feeling

that ended in his being kept in their midst till the end. And when he went not an enemy did he leave, not a spot on his life and he died as he had lived. *Requiescat in peace* Benoyendra, ever and fully worthy of the name in every way.

A close student of wide culture, a capable scholar, a conscientious worker he was an ideal professor, many of whose like are not common in modern times. And yet he was a rigid disciplinarian whose affable sternness made him his students' idol. And scholar and philosopher as he was, he was an administrator of no mean worth and calibre as all who worked with him as an University Inspector or as Secretary of the University Institute have reason to know and remember. Unbending yet tactful he combined independence with business commonsense of a high order in a remarkable degree and he made his superiors in the service and the junior members in the Institute give in whenever there was real need and he left no sore points in the trail. It was a remarkable gift of which many a public man in higher spheres of life could well be proud. He was equal to the situation whether he was clipping out something objectionable in the Institute theatricals or whether he was making an unwilling high official look eye to eye with University Inspectors in difficult and delicate situations of a super-embarassing nature.

And his faith was supreme and unswerving and his spirituality was intense. It was truly catholic withal. That is why all communities will equally miss him. Those who knew him better will speak of the different spheres of his varied public usefulness and I need not trespass where others would be more effective.

I shall just for a passing moment speak of the impression that he left in England where I came across many



that met him and remember him with loving reverence. His absolute and unswerving directness of purpose, a harmonious and loveable co-mingling of "sweetness and light"; "Hellenism" charmingly toning down "Hebraism" struck them most. There is a fiction abroad that Indians are now a days received in the better circles in England with uniform coldness if not rudeness. There could be no more grievous wrong to downright generous British hospitality of which I was fortunate in finding abundant evidence. All worthy of being well received are well received and made much of. All who have had the signal good fortune of being freely received in the inner circle of an Englishman's—I must add an Englishwoman's home—must remember and are remembered. And Benoyendra Nath is fondly remembered wherever he went. Principal Carpenter of the Manchester College, Oxford, and his good wife and many others that I came across had very little to talk to me about but Benoyendra Nath. And their uniform exhortation was "send us some more like him." Where are we to find them alas? And deepening echoe answers "where?"

*(The World and The New Dispensation, 1913).*

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REV. C. F. ANDREWS. \*

"Blessed are the peace-makers, for

They shall be called the children of God."

These are the words which first came to my mind when I heard the news that the prolonged suffering of Benoyendra Nath's closing days were over, and rest had come at last. And with these words were mingled the remembrance of the mourner's sacred text, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord. Even so, saith the spirit.

For they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them." He rests now from the painful labours of his well-spent life, and his works of love and sacrifice remain for our example.

I had never any opportunity of meeting Benoyendranath face to face, but I had read from time to time his published utterances and had heard about him from many intimate friends. His memory also in England was well known to me, and only last summer Dr. J. Estlin Carpenter of Manchester College, Oxford, spoke to me personally of his remarkable gifts,—his deep spirituality, his moral earnestness and pure simplicity. So, in these ways, he had become to me a kind of 'unknown' friend, with whom I had an instinctive and immediate spiritual sympathy; and I had made up my mind to cancel that word 'unknown' as soon as possible and after seeing him to number him among my known and valued friends, if he would extend to me that privilege. Then, when I came to Calcutta this year, and asked about him,—how I could find him and meet him,—it was a great shock to me to hear that he was very seriously ill and not expected to recover. I did not like, as a stranger, to intrude upon him at such a time of sickness and therefore did not go to see him. Now, looking back, I could almost wish that my diffidence had not prevented me, and that I had overcome the barrier of shyness. Spirit of India as it is represented and embodied in her own wonderful history, I used to feel present in his writings as a living reality and could understand it and appreciate it at its true value. When he spoke of the spirituality of the East, it was not a vague phrase including all sorts of things that are not really spiritual at all. It was not, further, a boastful phrase, in his case, made with a hasty assumption of superiority. On the contrary, it was spoken of, with awe

and reverence and humility, as a gift from God which India had come near to losing altogether, both in the past and in the present, on account of national folly and sin. His faith was unreserved. It would have been a joy to me to have had one living recollection of him, as he was, in the body. But perhaps,—who knows? the spiritual kinship may be all the closer in my own case, because not bound up with the bodily presence, can only say that this inner fellowship has been very real indeed, and that I owe to his transparently beautiful spirit a debt of gratitude hard to repay.

When I come to analyse what attracted me so much towards this 'unknown' friend, it was the combination of the two factors. On the one hand, there was the clear outshining love for India which made him able to interpret truly to others of a different race the strong and clear that this treasure had not been wholly lost; that in our own days it had begun to shine again with a new lustre; that its use and service was not for India alone but for the world. But this faith of his was all the more impressive, because it was humble and penitent, and without a touch of Pharisaism. It was this humility and simplicity of his faith, which I found had been most noticed and appreciated during his tour in the West by those who heard him.

The second point that attracted me was that he appeared to understand the true greatness of the West. He did not pay empty compliments to Western 'superiority' in respect of science and industrial development and other things which often only make the mind sad to hear emphasised at the expense of moral greatness; but he pointed us back to the true service of all nobility in the West, such as it is namely, the cross of Christ. He faithfully warned us to hold fast to the message of the crises

and not to forget that message amid the growing comforts and luxuries of modern life. He spoke as one who understood us and wished to help us to be true to the best that was in us. He seemed in a word, to know us—to know our best selves and to encourage us.

In this way he became, in the very highest sense of the word, a true peace-maker—one of those rare souls who can understand different temperaments, and explain them one to another in love. What a supreme quality of love there is behind such peace-making—the love that ‘thinketh no evil, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,—’ only those can fully appreciate who have tried to walk along the pathway of reconciliation which he followed, and have been misunderstood for doing so by both sides in turn.

A further point that was made clear to me in conversation with his pupils and friends was his intense moral earnestness,—the way in which his soul, whole soul went out into his work of teaching and instructing the young and leading them forward on the path of sacrifice. ‘Nothing is fruitful but sacrifice’ said the great Mazzini, and the words might have been made a text for all Benoyendranath’s inspiration which his pupils received. ‘Nothing is fruitful but sacrifice.’ The words are easily uttered, but not easily lived ; and the greatness of Benoyendranath’s teaching was this, that the words were lived. The last illness, with all its dark atmosphere of suffering and pain, was lighted up with a radiance not of this world, with a brightness which no earthly faith can give. It proved that the teacher of moral truths was himself a learner. ‘Now I begin to be a disciple’ said Ignatius of Antioch, when his own martyrdom was before him. Truly the suffering of Benoyendranath’s last days was itself a martyrdom, a bearing of the cross ; and it sealed

with his own blood the witness to moral truth which his whole life set forward. For the brightness and patience and peace and calm which he exhibited showed the true spirit of the hero, which his pupils had instinctively felt in days of bodily health and prosperous circumstance.

In the great humanity of the future, when East and West shall be re-united in religious fellowship, Benoyendranath's name will have its place among the peace-makers whom God calls His own children. It is our part now to cherish the lessons that he taught, both by example and by word of mouth. If it is possible to collect his published writings and present them to the public in an ordered form, this should certainly be done without delay. One of the saddest things at the present time that is happening in Bengal (I speak as a true friend) is the lack of permanent records of the great and noble lives which have been lived in the past and present generations. The age, in spite of much to the contrary, has been a really great one in Bengal, and historians in the future will look back with regret, if they find no sources to refer to whereby to distinguish its greatness.

I have spoken nothing in this memoir of Benoyendranath Sen's literary and scholastic distinction. I have met with his students who have spoken enthusiastically about his great powers and his splendid teaching capacity. I have not touched on this great as it was in him, but preferred rather to take the one spiritual and moral impression he has left upon my own mind. I cannot sum it up better than in the words with which I began :

"Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God."

The words as I write them take me back to that most beautiful of all blessings (which I heard so often repeated at *Shantiniketan*,—*Bolpur*)—the great *Vedic* blessing of

‘peace.’ That wonderful Sanskrit prayer, with its refrain of *Shanti, Shanti, Shanti* unites Benoyendra Nath’s soul with the great ages of the Indian past. May peace be with him now,—the peace that passeth understanding,—in the communion of the Eternal Love.

*(The World and The New Dispensation, 1913).*

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### SIR ASHUTOSH MUKERJEE.

Our grief is intensified in a manifold degree when we are reminded of the loss we have sustained by the premature death of Babu Benoyendra Nath Sen, who has been cut off in the prime of life by a fell disease, while still in the full vigour of manhood, in the plenitude of beneficent activity and with prospect of many years of useful work before him. The solidity of his learning, the soundness of his judgment, the nobility of his character, the unselfishness of his devotion to his lifelong mission, made him the ideal teacher, the guide, friend and philosopher of students who held him in the highest reverence and deepest affection. He commanded the genuine respect of all who came into contact with him in whatever sphere he worked, whether as an instructor of youth, as a member of the Board of Studies, as a member of the Board of Examiners, as an Inspector of Colleges or as the Secretary of that useful institution, the Calcutta University Institute, of which he was for many years the chief guiding spirit. He has passed away, his life work unfinished, but his memory will be lovingly cherished by future generations of students and educationists.

*(Calcutta University Convocation, 1914).*

DR. CHUNI LAL BOSE.

\* We have met here this evening to do honour to the memory of one who held a very high place in the affection and regard of the educated youngmen of Bengal and who was admitted by all as one of their best friends and a most trusted leader. The life of the late Prof. Benoyendranath Sen is a source of perennial interest and inspiration to his countrymen, young and old, and it is proper that we should meet, at least once a year, to pay our respects to his hallowed memory and draw inspiration therefrom to improve and elevate our own lives. The Calcutta University Institute owes a great deal of its popularity, usefulness and prosperity to Prof. Benoyendranath Sen's untiring exertions and devoted labours as one of its past Honorary Secretaries. It is, therefore, a matter of great satisfaction to find that the Institution has taken upon itself the duty of organising, annually, a meeting on the 12th day of April to solemnly observe the death anniversary of Prof. Sen and has founded a scholarship in his name to be managed by the Students' Fund (which he himself started) to help a poor student in the prosecution of his studies. On this, the Calcutta University Institute deserves our best thanks.

The lives of great and good men are valuable assets not only to the nation to which they belong but to the world at large, because all such men live, not for their places of birth or their people alone, but for the humanity at large. All men, directly or indirectly, are benefited by their work and by their examples. Such a life was led by Prof. Benoyendranath Sen. He was an ideal teacher, an educationist in the highest sense of the term, a practical philosopher, a man of high moral principles, of great strength and purity of character, of

high spiritual culture and a most kind helping friend. He was dead to self and lived for others only. His intellectual attainments were of a high order and his heart was very warm and capacious. He belonged to this earth but the vanities, the weaknesses and the littlenesses of this world could not touch him. His spirit always soared above the things of the earth and lived in communion with his Heavenly Father, while he devoted his physical body, his mind and his energies to the services of his fellow-brethren. His unselfish life, his devotion to duty, his inspiring teachings, his spotless character and his charming personality gained for him a very large number of disciples and friends to whom his death was a great personal loss. The two more marked features of his character were his absolute trust in the Providence of God and his unbounded faith in the goodness of the human soul. He always took a hopeful and cheerful view of all things and he would never allow any unpromising circumstance to damp his spirit or influence his decision and this helped him a great deal in solving many a difficult problem in his dealings with men of contrary views and persuasions.

His activities were not confined to educational work only. From a humble worker in the Church of the New Dispensation, he rose to the position of a leader; and men outside the Church once entertained the hope that in time the gap left by the death of the illustrious Keshub Chunder Sen would be partially, if not fully, filled up by him. The confidence he enjoyed of the members of his own religious community may be judged from the fact that he was elected as President of the All India Theistic Conference held at Lahore; and they also did him the honour by electing him as their representative on the World's Theistic Conference held in Geneva.



He had thus the opportunity, of travelling to Europe and America and of gaining first hand experience of the various educational systems and modes of thinking prevailing in the western countries and he was not slow to utilise them in respect of his work in India. Of men like him, the poet has truly said :—

“Lives of great men all remind us,  
We can make our lives sublime,  
And departing, leave behind us,  
Foot-prints on the sands of time.”

Prof. Benoyendranath Sen has left behind him his imperishable foot-prints and it is my earnest prayer that our young men should try their best to follow these marks as their best light and guide in the conduct of their lives.

*(Calcutta University Institute, 1918).*

#### RAI BAHADUR LALIT MOHAN CHATTERJEE.

As I recall the winning personality of Benoyendra Nath Sen, the first thought that arises is that he was one of those rare men who go through life without provoking any hostile feeling. Even the best of men, men to whom homage is readily paid, sometimes inspire a secret feeling of hostility, perhaps on account of their very goodness. But the good elements were so happily mixed in Benoyendra Nath Sen's character that he called forth nothing but love from all who knew him, a love mingled with true respect. The feeling he called forth was not merely that of admiration for his good qualities. It was a response to the attraction of his personality, of his pure and beautiful nature. His character was like a piece of exquisite music in which the notes are harmoniously mingled. There was never any jar or discord. There was nothing in him that repelled.

I have heard it said sometimes that Benoyendra Nath Sen possessed the rare virtue of "sanity." He did possess it; only the word "sanity" is too cold and un-beautiful to indicate the impression which Benoyendra Nath Sen made on those who drew near him. There was something more than mere sanity, something warm and emotional. There was no topsidedness or eccentricity in his nature, not even the eccentricity of genius.

Somewhat allied to this general harmony of his character was the balanced constitution of his intellect. He was a student of Philosophy, History and Literature. There were deep springs of emotion in him. He was not a student of Mathematics or of Science. Yet I have seldom seen a man whose mental adjustments were so accurate and so unclogged. What he knew, he knew clearly and could express clearly. The impressions which he received from books were clear and deep and were retained by a faithful memory.

It was this, among other things, that made him such a good teacher. His lectures and notes were clear as daylight both in their contents and in their expression. Lucidity, rather than suggestiveness or brilliance was his characteristic as a teacher. He purposely limited the range of his exposition to the general requirements of his class but he surveyed clearly and accurately the area that he covered. He made his exposition not merely lucid but he made it vivid, alive with emotion and appealing in its beauty. In his lectures he touched upon the human side of his subject—or, one might say, its moral side in the broad sense of the word. This was the secret of his popularity as a teacher at Presidency College.

Outside the class no professor was more frank and open and human with his students. But he was never

vulgarly familiar. His students knew that he was guileless and they never deceived him.

He always appealed directly or indirectly to the nobler elements of their nature. In the pleasant excursions in which he joined his students, such as a steamer trip on the river, he brought them unobtrusively into contact with the beauty and the quietness of Nature, or he would speak incidentally of the noblest things in the lives and writings of men like Ruskin or Carlyle or Emerson or Tennyson or Browning.

I have often wondered who was the author who appealed most to Benoyendra Nath Sen and it is one more proof of the harmony of his nature that to answer the question is not easy. On the whole I should think that his first love was Tennyson. Then he grew into loving Ruskin and Browning. Latterly he was reading a good deal of Indian literature and philosophy. His study of the *Vedanta* is to be found in his beautiful lectures on "The Intellectual Ideal". Here, if anywhere, the expositor's power of clear presentation is put to the test. Says Professor Sayce, "I have been charmed with the lucid and attractive language in which the most abstruse questions of philosophy and religion have been explained in it." Another critic of high authority says that in the lectures the subject has been treated "from the inside." This was indeed Benoyendra Nath Sen's method as a teacher. In reading all his writings the reader feels, to quote the same critic, as if he was "in contact with a clear thinker and a very fine moral nature." He told me that he considered the *Ramayana* as the greatest epic in the world. He had come in contact with Rabindranath Tagore before the poet had become a world figure and the acquaintance was helpful to both.

Love of Nature was a marked trait in him. In the heart of bustling, noisy, smoky, brick-built Calcutta it is not easy to commune with Nature. So he would sometimes slip out, with a friend, to the wide *maidans* or to the river-side, after night-fall when the moon had touched heaven and earth into a soft romantic beauty. There they would sit for hours, silent or gently talking, or he would make his friend sing some of his favourite hymns of the Brahma Somaj.

When he went with his friends out of Calcutta to a hill-station or merely on a pilgriming tour he often had a rapt day-dreaming look which showed that he was taking in the beauty of the scene.

I love to recall a walking tour from Chittagong into the interior of the district, visiting sacred places of pilgrimage. We were a party of friends—all connected with what we used to call in Calcutta "the Prayer Meeting." Benoyendra Nath Sen was one of our party. Another was Mohit Chundra Sen. As we walked through the wooded solitudes there broke unexpectedly upon the silence a loud and continuous note as if the fingers of a hundred woodnymphs were sweeping a hundred strings. We were told that the sound was produced by a tree-cricket. Our minds at that time were attuned to solemn thought; for the scenery was beautiful and a holy silence was brooding on the whole place. The effect of this sudden strain from invisible minstrels was indescribable. When we came to a tiny waterfall we went and stood under it and imagined that all evil in us was being washed away. We carried some fried rice and sugar with us which we doled out, procured some very acid lemons and fell to without ceremony for we were hungry as we had never been before. As we approached the Chandra-nath Hill we met people who told us that a tiger had

been seen in the locality which gave us a thrill of excitement. Coming to the base of the hill we slaked our thirst from the clear cool water which was conducted by means of split tree-stems from a spring higher up in the hill. Then we began to climb. It was a small hill, but we had recently read Dante's *Purgatorio* and we had strong imaginations. As we followed up the path we thought we were mounting from circle to circle of *Purgatorio* like Dante guided by the shade of Virgil and, lo, after going a little way up we got a glimpse of the far off "trembling sea." Here our guide and most inspiring companion was Mohitchundra Sen. Benoyendra Nath was silent, rapt in thought, receptive. And he was the first, I think, who got to the top. When we came up we found a tiny broken temple. And we had discovered another in our hearts.

Benoyendra Nath Sen made rich and noble use in his public utterances of the impressions that came to him from Nature, as well as of the suggestions that came from the reading of great writers—for he was a born speaker. There was nothing artificial or specially pre-arranged in his speaking. The thoughts that came to him from many sources, books, Nature, men, women, children, public movements, sank into the gulfs of his mind and came forth after "suffering a sea-change," endowed with a beauty and a depth of appeal borrowed from his quiet meditation. His manner of speaking was inspired. He laid down the reins as his thought carried him forward, finding their own apt expression. As he warmed up, a glow mounted to his face but there was no other sign of excitement. His eloquence was struck out of him like water from the stroke of Moses' wand.

What he said and what he wrote and indeed what he did revealed the depths of a meditative nature. Next to

sweetness the trait of his nature that impressed those who knew him was his serenity. Outer impressions and inner experiences were transfigured in the tranquility of thought, and everything created in him a placid serenity of mind that was like the moonlit surface of a lake. And as one sailed over that surface and looked down into its depths one felt like sailing over waters full and deep, and dark with mystery.

I have referred to the prayer meetings we used to have in Calcutta. Those were some of the best days of our lives. The *Navavidhan Somaj* was then split up into sections under different leaders. We did not care to examine the points of difference between the views of different sections. Our general feeling was that the differences were personal. Mr. Protap Chunder Mozumdar was the head of one section. But we all felt that we should have prayer meetings of our own. We were determined on one thing. "No sectarian spirit," said we, "no domination of a sectional leader; freedom of worship just as the heart prompted." Not that we discarded forms; we kept the usual forms, but we used them in a free spirit. So we met on Saturday evenings. Benoyendra Nath Sen, Mohit Chundra Sen and some others conducted the service. The missionaries and the elders of the Church were not asked to come. We met at first in a room at Peace Cottage, Mr. Mozumdar's house, and then in a back room in the Brahma Mandir. There was no priest-craft, no quarreling about the pulpit or who should occupy it, no cavilling about forms and technicalities. In that pure atmosphere of freedom our souls grew from week to week. From Saturday to Saturday we thought of nothing but the prayer meeting. Through the prayers our hearts drew closer together. That friendship was pure and sweet

and none was more loved and respected among us than Benoyendra Nath Sen.

Yet he was reserved. He was never gushing. But his reserve was a soft, not a stony, reserve. Nor was he tame or lacking in spirit. He was not the man to put up with a moment's injustice from his official superiors. But he acted quietly and firmly and never burst out. Even in his relations with his friends, whenever he thought there was a lack of response, he withdrew into his shell. This may have been one reason why he did not assume a position of leadership in the Brahmo Somaj when many people thought him so eminently fitted for such leadership.

The most illuminating phases in the life of a man who lives to any purpose are youth and old age. Benoyendra Nath Sen did not live to attain old age. He belonged to the third generation of youngmen in the Brahmo Somaj who felt the influence of the new truths in their lives. The first generation was the group that, with Keshub at their head, separated from the Adi Brahmo Somaj. The second generation included Nandalal Sen and the saintly Hirananda. The third generation consisted of Promotho Loll Sen, Benoyendra Nath Sen, Mohit Chundra Sen and others. These three men were at one time looked upon as inseparables. But death separated them. First went the youngest, Mohit Chundra Sen; then Benoyendra Nath Sen. Promotho Loll Sen is happily still spared to us and is now verging on old age. In him we see how sanctified old age can be when it is supported by faith. But two other possible pictures were not destined to be drawn. In their youth these men were similar yet different. In pure character, in unworldliness, in the desire to live in the region of high thoughts they were similar. But Promotho Loll Sen was from the beginning separated

unto the service of the Lord, and the spell of Keshub fell most on him. Benoyendra Nath Sen was the most introspective, the most reserved and perhaps the most richly endowed with natural goodness and gentleness. Mohit Chundra Sen was brilliant, impatient, filled with a lofty scorn for things petty and ignoble.

Promotho Loll Sen, Benoyendra Nath Sen and Mohit Chundra Sen, we thought, were not marrying men. People could not picture any of them as *pater familias* or even as a bridegroom wearing the tinsel crown. But there was really no reason for the belief except, perhaps, in the case of Promotho Loll. Yet, however unreasonable the general belief might be, it took some courage on the part of Benoyendra Nath to run counter to everybody's expectations. Marriage is often the acid test of a man's real quality. So far as one could judge, marriage did not produce any romantic levity in him even in the earlier weeks. Indeed it gradually deepened and enriched his nature and humanised him more. Half the credit for this must surely be given to the thoughtful girl whom he made his partner in life. Promotho Loll Sen retains the monastic touch though the world is his monastery.

Many people wondered why Benoyendra Nath did not become a missionary of the Brahmo Somaj. For who thought so deeply of the Brahmo Somaj as he? Who loved it more? Who wanted more to serve it? He often conducted divine service in public. He maintained a strict simplicity of life. He had no worldly ambition. He never hankered after wealth or high place. He found his highest self-expression in the services he rendered to his Church. When, on his return from his Western tour, he showed me the gown-like coat and the characteristic hat which he used to wear in Europe, I smiled and said "a sort of clergyman's dress?" He smiled and kept silent. During



his last illness I asked him what changes he thought, the future would bring about in the methods of work in the Somaj. He said "I think public worship will become shorter and more like chants, more choral. Missionaries of the present type (living on the gifts of the community and doing only church work) will not be repeated. The missionary of the future will be the lay householder who joins missionary work to his worldly avocations and who lives in an unworldly spirit." Such a type of missionary was Benoyendra Nath Sen himself.

One word about the last scene of all. The sufferer lay in his bed of pain. In the antechamber people were constantly dropping in and making enquiries in subdued whispers. Brothers, friends were sitting or standing here and there, worn out and depressed. I stepped up softly to the sickbed. Full in sight on the wall was a picture of Christ hanging on the cross. On another wall, also in sight, was a picture from his favourite book the *Ramayana*. The princess Seeta banished by her sorrowing husband was watching from behind a tree in Valmiki's hermitage as her two sons were being taught by the sage to sing the praises of the king, their father. Shrunken to the bones lay the pilgrim who was preparing for his last journey. Only the singing of the great hymns of the Brahmo Somaj could soothe his sufferings. Hymn after hymn was sung. He lay hushed, with closed eyes. The minutes went by. When the singing was over he opened his eyes and smiled and looked refreshed. And lo, many of the household had slipped in unperceived and seated themselves round the bed, all absorbed, like him, in the thoughts that came floating on the wings of music from a world beyond the grave. And that was the last time I saw Benoyendra Nath Sen.

(Dacca, November 18, 1927).

### Unveiling of Portrait.

The unveiling ceremony of the portrait of the late Professor Benoyendra Nath Sen took place on the afternoon of 12th April at the University Institute Hall. The Hon. Justice Sir Ashutosh Chaudhuri presided. There was a large number of professors, students and admirers of the deceased.

The proceedings opened with a song of the late Mr. D. L. Roy. This over, Principal J. R. Banerjea paid a glowing tribute to the deceased.

Rai Bahadur Dr. Chunilal Basu said that the late Professor Benoyendra Nath Sen devoted his life to the service of the student community in Bengal. His life was a living illustration of what plain living and high thinking meant.

Mr. Justice Chaudhuri in course of his speech said that the deceased was not only a great teacher but also a preacher. He did much for the students. He felt that it was necessary to love the students. He was a sincere worker and that the loss the country had suffered by his death was irreparable. He hoped that the example set by that great man would be followed by his students with advantage.

The President then proceeded to unveil the portrait which was a speaking likeness of the late Mr. Sen and was admirably executed.

With a vote of thanks to the chair, the meeting terminated.—*Indian Daily News*.

### LORD RONALDSAY.

The late Professor Benoyendra Nath Sen, the polished scholar and fine product of Indian culture combined with Western education accepts the Hindu estimate of *Sruti*

which he defines as "the record of what is revealed to the soul of genius in the moment of its highest exaltation," and while he agrees with *Sankara* that the testimony of reason is conclusive in favour of the view that the universe which is the divine exuberance blooming into a perpetual efflorescence is of the substance of *Brahman*, that is, that the sensuous world is an aspect of God Himself—he also holds with *Sankara* that the testimony of revelation to the same effect possesses a force overwhelmingly greater than that of mere reason. "Had the texture woven by the world-spirit in the loom of time not been the visible garment of God Himself, had the universe not been the self-revelation of God," the idea of God could never have occurred to the mind of man. "Shut up in the hard, opaque prison-house of matter, with pleasure and death for his masters, man had never thought of God at all."

Accepting the monistic view of *Sankara* that *Brahman* is the sole ultimate reality, he faces the two questions of fundamental importance to which this view gives rise—How can the Infinite and Absolute admit of anything different from itself? And how can a world of sin and suffering proceed from a perfect God? And he finds an adequate answer to them in *Sankara's* doctrine of *Maya*, the latter being defined as the power by which the "Infinite Enchanter has contrived to put His own substance, which must be of the character of the Infinite, and the Absolute, into this texture which is woven in space and time." In his explanation of *Maya* he dwells upon two characteristics attributed to it by *Sankara*, first, that of manifesting itself through name and form, and secondly, that of being not determinable either by Being or non-Being.

Professor Sen explains that the characteristic of all knowledge of the universe is that it rests upon the superimposition of a concept upon the object, which attempts but is unable to express its true being. Hence it becomes necessary to change the concept the next moment as it seems that a truer realisation of the object has been attained; but this again has to be given up like the first, and thus the process of superimposition after superimposition goes on because the true being of the object is never reached. If we pause to consider the nature of manifested things, the meaning of the above passage becomes clear. Let us ask ourselves, for example, if the name or form under which a thing presents itself to us is rigid and constant?

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Professor Benoyendra Nath Sen's answer to the second question to which I have referred, namely, how can a world of sin and suffering proceed from a perfect God? "If sorrow had been only the soul of bitterness, and joy only the overflowing of bliss, you might have charged God with partiality in distributing joy and sorrow unequally. But if sorrow has in its depths a hidden fountain of joy, and joy rests on a basis of deepest pain, nay, even if within the darkness of sin, there is a hidden power that maketh for righteousness—there is no inequality to complain of; but every object high or low, great or small, is equally a reflection of the Infinite in the finite."

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However imperfectly one may have understood his beliefs and aspirations, one can at least have no doubt that for him the *Vedanta* is something a great deal more than a flight of the mind, however daring, in the vast

realms of speculation, something beyond an excursion of the intellect, however bold, into a subtle world of metaphysic; something transcending an exercise of the faculty of ratiocination, however brilliant; a thing of the essence of religion; a thing capable of ministering to that craving of the soul which turns away unsatisfied from the highest that the intellect by itself has got to offer. For him, with all his reverence for reason, there stands something which is higher than reason, something which can only be vaguely indicated by the word—Faith. “For I hold it truth” he declares, “—this that the *Upanishads* teach—that the ideal of the intellect is wonder and reverence. Not wonder and reverence at the sacrifice of knowledge, or in opposition to it; but when knowledge has been brought to its utmost height, even that of realising that Reason is the Lord of the Universe, there is still a mysterious beyond, into which the intellect must look, and lose itself in that mystery. I also hold it truth that the intellect in its highest operation is intuitive and not discursive. The operations of reason we can analyse and know, but towards the Infinite the only attitude that is possible is communion. To those ancient *Rishis* the privilege was given not simply to speculate and speak about metaphysical abstractions, but with purified hearts and devoted souls to hold communion with that which is beyond all speech or speculation, and realise in that communion the highest bliss of life.”

*On Prof. Benoyendra Nath Sen's "Intellectual Ideal"  
in the Hearts of Aryabhartha.)*

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## CHAPTER XIII.

## A REVIEW.

How beautiful is a lily in full bloom or a rose scattering its fragrance around unasked. But is not a human life when in full bloom, harmoniously developed, always rising straight to a stately height like some high mountain rising tier above tier, stratum above stratum till the peaks are lost in the region of eternal snows more beautiful and more sublime to look at. If so, look at the figure of Benoyendra Nath, meek and gentle and pure as a lily in bloom scattering his virtues like a rose in full bloom. Coming to the Presidency College, he engaged himself voluntarily in multifarious useful works for the improvement of his fellowmen and for the Church to which he belonged. He first started an ideal Boarding House for students. Here he first separated himself from his home. The Boarding House was situated in the Harrison Road in a three-storied house. Here he lived and worked and here the example of his life, the excellence of his teaching and his genuine affability of manners and modesty of disposition won for him lasting love and gratitude of the students who lived in it as boarders. The Boarding House thrived and prospered excellently well under his management till at last it was dissolved after his marriage, when he again entered into the bosom of his loving family with his dutiful and accomplished wife till the tragic end came and took him away to the land of eternal bliss, to that unknown and unknowable land from whose bourne no traveller returns, leaving his family and innumerable disciples and admirers and friends to mourn his loss as best as they might.

Here were held regular prayer meetings and sometimes outsiders came and delivered lectures. Once there was an at-home ceremony in which Rev. P. C. Mozoomdar came and spoke on various subjects to the boarders and many invited distinguished visitors were present. On one occasion, I remember, Mr. Nagendra Ch. Mitra who never cut off his connection with Benoy and who had just then returned from England, delivered a lecture on "Regeneration." The purport of his lecture was that there is in every one of us a sleeping lion which requires to be roused up. Every man has within him latent possibilities which must be cultured and roused to meet the demand of life and to carry us on successfully through many trials and sufferings which fall in the lot of every created being. At this time, he mixed freely with Rev. Mozoomdar. The *trio* of the Brahmo Samaj—Benoyendra, Mohit Chandra and Rev. Promotho Lall or our dear Nalooda—gathered round this great sage and devotee of the Peace Cottage, whose sweet devotion, spiritual experience and daily communion with the pervading spirit of God immanent in nature and in complex human mind helped the young men to gather experiences and to advance in the path of spirituality which was the only aim of their lives. Rev. Mr. Mozoomdar lived six months in the summer season in his beautiful, lonely romantic retreat at Kurseong and six months on the approach of winter he came down from the hills and lived in the "Peace Cottage," Calcutta. In his absence these young men corresponded with him regularly. Benoy looked to his affairs and had charge of the publication of his "Interpreter." Mr. Mozoomdar always spoke very highly of my friend, and used to say that Benoy was not an ordinary man. The influence of such a great saintly soul, such a devotee, such a great thinker and a real

poet, was not lost upon the susceptible mind of my young friend then in full vigour and activity. When Mr. Mozoomdar remained in Calcutta Benoyendra would often in the evening go to him and sit at his feet. Once he took and introduced me to him as his early friend and companion. He talked on various subjects like a great sage and every one present was charmed at the power of his conversation. He spoke in eloquent praise of America and the rising spirit of the Americans and their progress and improvement in every department of life. He spoke of the unity of the British nation, how with all difference of opinion about the Boer war the entire nation rose as one man when the prestige of the British nation was at stake. It is not for me to speak of Mr. Mozoomdar but I will never forget in my life the various benefits I have derived from his writings and utterances. Even after so many years his eloquence, his sweet devotion, ring in my ears, which I shall never forget. Those who were more intimately connected with him, those who came more under the direct influence of his mighty personality, those who drank the sweet nectar of his conversation may more fitly bear testimony to the worth of such a soul than my humble self who worshipped him with all the idolatrous veneration from a distance, and considered the ground he trode as sacred ground and the place where his ashes lie buried in the Peace Cottage compound, as fit place of pilgrimage, for saints, devotees and thinkers and poets of all ages and all lands. I can write at great length on Mr. Mozoomdar but I desist, lest I will underestimate him, for he is too far above me to attempt to write of him. But in connection with the task I have taken up on myself voluntarily though not competent to perform it to any great satisfaction, I could not resist the temptation of paying my passing humble



tribute of respect to the memory of one whom I revered when living and whom I idolize now that he is no more in flesh in our midst.

A writer of Benoyendra's biography must first attempt to go to the very root whence his life developed. The influence of the Minister Keshub Chander Sen is the fountain from which flowed his spirituality. Hence to write a life of Benoyendranath without showing the influence of the Minister on his life and character is to write a play of Hamlet with the part of Hamlet left out. He yielded to none in his respect and love towards the Minister. His was a Platonic idealism. I have marked the love for the Minister in him from our very acquaintance. He combed his hair like him, he put on his *chadar* in the similar fashion: To him he was the most beautiful person ever seen in this world. Once he told me, "if you see any one more good-looking than Keshub Chunder show him to me." A day before the death of the great religious leader he went to his native village *Tribeni*. He came back when everything was over, but he was fortunate enough to follow the grandest and the most imposing funeral procession our city has ever beheld and he remarked afterwards, "I would have never in my life gone to *Tribeni* again if I were deprived of following the funeral procession." He could repeat any portion from the Minister's English lectures and sermons. They were his spiritual food. On them he lived day by day till he assimilated all his teachings and lived to the very high standard preached by him. He lived to the great ideals of the Church to which he belonged and was seen never to deviate an inch from them. Thus grew and grew this mighty soul, this great spiritual hero.

In the class room I remember, he would make Babu Benoy Bhushan Bose, who is also no more in the world

and whose loss we all mourn, son of the famous apostle Rev. Bhai Amrita Lal Bose, sit beside him and hear him speak of the Lily Cottage, Peace Cottage and Mangalbari. We were never tired of hearing his tale about the Lily Cottage. For hours together he would ply him with question after question and he nothing loath would tell him of all he knew. Such was the keen interest a lad of fourteen only felt for the Minister Keshub Chunder and his works, and everything related to him.

In his letter to a friend, written in July, 1884 (which is quoted elsewhere) the "angel" referred to was Keshub, the angel of whom he observed—"He is the object of my study, his ideal my ideal, to follow him and serve him is my aspiration." And young Benoyendra even in his personal habits sought to keep close to his model. Many years afterwards in his lecture on "Banished for Home" he said:—

"And I have not the slightest doubt, that when the illusions of the earth drop off, and things come to be seen in their proper light, every Indian heart will recognise, in this man of isolation, this inscrutable figure that loved God alone and taught others to love God alone,—the closest, dearest, sweetest personal friend that it can claim for itself, the beautifullest and loveliest figure that India has produced since the days of Sri Gauranga."

Benoyendra did not so much come in direct contact with the great Brahmo leader, as he did with Mr. Mozoomdar, but yet his influence on him was simply unbounded. He used to attend the Church very regularly and hung upon the utterances of the Minister. On no account will he absent himself from the Church on Sundays. He thought it a sacred duty. Fortunate indeed is the nation which can

boast of such a soul as Keshub Chunder, for his influence permeates the entire country, and the force of his life and character go to form the whole national life. The life of such a heroic soul sheds its divine lustre throughout the length and breadth of the whole world. We all know how the whole generation and even posterity was affected by the teachings of Keshub Chunder. Those who do not profess his religion follow him indirectly. It is not a mere idle saying that he pushed the country a century ahead. The various reforms and activities, the many upheaval of religious institutions, the questions of reforms, all social and political, owe their origin to Keshub Chunder Sen. And when such a life became the very ideal of my friend it is no wonder that the life raised him higher and heavenward, created in him a noble impulse to strive after spiritual perfection and helped him to direct his career. What charm there was in the man that held charmed and entranced thousands of audience by his utterances. Sweet as the strain of the Eolian harp, majestic and solemn as the Dorian music, sublime as the falls of Niagra, were the utterances that fired the enthusiasm and energy of millions. Such was the grand humanity before Benoyendra's youthful imagination and he with all the earnestness of his soul tried to follow in his footsteps and was immensely profited by his example of life and excellence of his teachings. Though in after-life he asserted his own individualism and followed the bent of his own genius, yet he ever remembered gratefully the teachings of the Minister embalmed in the heart of his hearts as a sacred treasure, and ever tried to glorify his name and his Church. Babu Keshub Ch. Sen was of course the ideal of Benoy, the angel in human shape, the great prophet of harmony of the nineteenth century heralding to the world in the voice of thunder the advent

of a new faith which will harmonise all the religions of the world. It was what the modern science and all the cultured heads of the civilised world are aiming to fulfil. With the vision of a prophet he could see the new glorious light dawning upon the world with all the splendour and freshness of the morning sun and filling the entire world. Such was the ideal Benoy had before him, but unfortunately he was not enough grown up then as to come more intimately under the magical influence of that august personality. He revered him from a distance, as a glorious vision which was soon swept away from his sight by the icy hand of death. Yet its influence guided him through his entire life. But he came under the direct influence of Mr. Mozoomdar and had opportunities enough to imbibe his spiritual influences and was impressed by his personality. It is not often that we come across a soul so pure ætherial and angel-like whose God-vision was no dream and outcome of a heated brain, no inexplicable mysticism, but a glad reality. The veil that shuts from our physical eyes the glories of heaven was withdrawn as if merely by the wand of a magician and he stood face to face with the Holy of Holies. Hence his devotion was so soul-entrancing, hence in his devotion the souls of the hearers were carried in triumphant harmony to the region whose beauty and splendour no human pen can describe.

While in the Boarding House of Harrison Road, Benoyendra's activity flowed in various channels. He worked for the Calcutta University Institute, he delivered lectures, wrote articles. He mixed in all the movements of the Church to which he belonged and always took a leading part in its affairs, the particulars of which may be written by men intimately connected with the Church and by those who were then his constant companions.

for after he came to Calcutta, I had not time enough to be much in his company, though I always took a keen interest in all his works. I knew full well that whatever work he might take upon himself to perform, he would do it thoroughly, for thoroughness was always his watch-word as Lord Dufferin in his address in the Calcutta University Convocation as its Chancellor said that the graduates of the Calcutta University must practise thoroughness in all work they will lay their hands on.

I shall only write a few words here on his marriage. Benoy never said that he would not marry, though we often thought on account of the missionary spirit in him from his very childhood that he would observe a life-long celibacy. I was not of course surprised to hear of his marriage though it was unexpected, for he never gave out to any one that he would remain a bachelor. Mohit Chandra, of course, told me many times that he would ever remain single. Mohit would follow and imitate Benoy in many things. So he too followed Benoy and married. One day I heard from my esteemed friend Babu Debendranath Bose who was living in the same hostel that Benoy was going to be married and he also regretted that after the marriage he would not be able to serve others so much as he could in his bachelor days. But, I told him there was nothing to apprehend in that respect for Benoy would always be what he is, married or unmarried. He married for he felt its want and thought it to be his duty. I, of course, know nothing of the lady whom he made the companion of his life, but from the prayer she offered on the occasion of the *Sradh* ceremony of her husband, I may say that she was in every respect a fitting companion to such a great soul and that his conjugal life was an uninterrupted course of peace, and felicity seldom enjoyed by my countrymen. He married a daughter of the late

Rev. Bhai Prosonna Coomar Sen, a well-known figure and character in the Brahmo Samaj, His brother-in-law Mr. Prasanta Kumar Sen, now a Bar-at-Law, also lived in the said Boarding. And I have heard from my worthy friend Deben Babu that Benoy often consumed midnight oil in writing long letters to his betrothed. So, I presume, that Benoy could know well the nature and accomplishments of his intended wife by a course of correspondence with her long before the marriage. He has left behind him an only daughter as the fruit of his marriage. But what is strange, he never perhaps spoke of his wife to any friend of his, at least I never heard him speak of her. It was a theme which he did not like others to hear perhaps. I have already written that after his marriage he entered again into the bosom of his family and lived in it the remaining days of his life. Though at one time he separated himself from his family yet he was never indifferent to its members. He was proud of his saintly father. He loved his mother with all the tenderness of a son. He was always loving to his brothers and sisters and to all his relations near or distant. He would often speak to me about his *Baramama*, the late Rai Tara Prasanna Roy Bahadur, Chemical Examiner to the Government, the predecessor of Rai Dr. Chunilal Bose Bahadur, who is an ardent admirer of Prof. Benoyendranath Sen and presided over a death anniversary meeting of the professor in the hall of the Institute. He had a cousin whom he called "Bhuto" and I have forgotten unfortunately his real name, he loved and liked him very much, and he would often join our prayer meetings whenever he came to Benoy's house. In our early days, when we were mere children reading in the 3rd class of the Albert School, this cousin of Benoy conducted the Divine Service once or twice in his humble

residence of Kansaripara when all the members of the family were not at home. Then in the evening, Benoy's father came home from office and treated us to sweets. This sort of thing would often happen in the days of our childhood. We were then always so happy and merry in the enjoyment of Benoy's companionship. Those were the golden days of our lives and even now in the midst of multifarious duties and many sorrows and sufferings, those aurora-coloured days of childhood would rise before me in all their joys and delights and make me forget the present. We sometimes live in the past and find therein food enough to beguile many a weary hours in utter oblivion of our present sorrow, care, and anxieties. Many of the friends and admirers of the professor must have marked, I think the strange change in Benoy after his marriage. The tender heart grew more tender, the loving disposition exhibited itself in all his writings and utterances. Love seemed to hold supreme sway in his heart. Love, in the highest sense of the word, possessed him entirely. He was a man of feeling in the noblest sense of that word, for he loved all with the heart of a brother. His soul rushed forth in sympathy with all. Every gentle and generous affection, every sign of nobleness awakened in his bosom a response. His love floated round in deep swells, soft, pure and soul-entrancing like the song of angels. What a large heart must he have to love all, to embrace all and feel for all. Aversion itself was not hatred to him. He despised what is wrong, but with tolerance also he would forgive. Love in fact was the atmosphere in which he breathed, the medium through which he looked. Love makes everything beautiful, when looked through the medium of love, the most ugly being appears beautiful. So the entire universe was beautiful in the eyes of my

friend. Love sanctifies everything and makes everything look beautiful. He thus speaks of love in one place. "We have even so much degraded the conception of love itself, that the idea of the removal of some personal want, a response to some internal craving, has become mixed up as an almost essential constituent even with our highest thought about it."

How love even may mean a fulness in which there is not even the trace of a want, even in the highest sense—giving itself naturally, ceaselessly to others without the dream of a return. This sort of disinterested and unselfish love is the outcome of a full man, a man whose culture has been cosmopolitan, and whose is the entire universe. By loving all men as brothers we learn to love God as our Father and Mother, and again when the love of God fills the soul of a man, it awakens in him a marvellous impulse to love all, and embrace the entire humanity. Then the difference of race, creed, or colour, all melts away like the mist before the rising sun. Then we feel no difference between one country and another, between one race and another, but all become one. The whole world, is one, the whole race of mankind is one. As Keshub says in his farewell address in England, "Farewell, my Father's Western Home." Such is a universal man to whatever country or nationality he may belong, he looks upon all with the same loving and affectionate eyes of a brother with such cosmopolitan love. The Himalayas or the vast oceans are no insurmountable barriers between different countries of the world. Lo! the barriers are all vanished and all the entire vast world with one Father and Creator sitting upon His throne on high and presiding over all. If the feeling of love be cultured, if we all learn to love one another then a new era will dawn upon the world, destroying



all party spirit and race animosity. The pride of birth, the pride of superior culture and education, the most injurious sentiment of the conqueror and the conquered, all these feelings of rancour and animosity, of unbrotherliness and sectarianism will at once vanish from our earth, and the earth so full of cares and anxieties, of sorrows and sufferings will be a paradise where love will reign supreme and when love's empire will be extended from one end of the world to the other. It may seem to many a digression but it is not actually so, for such a love actuated my friend and led him on to serve his fellow men. We feel so keenly at times the want of love and the necessity of being loved in the rough world full of so many heart-rending sorrows and despair that if we find love everywhere then all sorrows and sufferings will lose their poignancy and we shall cheerfully suffer all sorts of wants and difficulties. Then there will be no one naked in the world, there will be no one hungry, none will repent in solitude over his hard fate, none will feel the overwhelming influence of sorrow in his state of bereavement and utter hopelessness. In short, if love would be supreme on earth then this world of ours will be a second Garden of Eden once more. Jesus came down to preach such love. He came down to form one entire brotherhood of the whole race of man and for this he gave his life on the Cross. For this he bled, or how could he pray in the moment of the great excruciating agony that flesh can bear "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing." This is the highest and the noblest example of love shown since the dawn of creation. And how the love of the Prophet of Nadia inundated Bengal in one mighty flow and how his heart went out for every sinner and how he longed to embrace all in his loving bosom. The more such examples of

love is shown in this world, the more it will advance in the path of spirituality and there will be less of jealousy, cruelty, race-feeling and animosity and fewer wars to exterminate one another. This love of my friend will be and ought to be an object lesson to all who admire him. There is a tendency everywhere now-a-days to bring about such a spirit as will strike at the root of all sorts of sectarianism and party spirit and race animosity. The haughty sway of a victorious nation towards a down-trodden enemy must heartily be despised especially if it comes from a nation who profess to believe in the religion of Jesus Christ.

My friend was not an intellectual colossus like Dr. Seal, yet his intellectual attainments and scholarship were of no mean order and he is one of the best products of English education in India and any country in which such a man is born may very well be proud of him. He was not a huge reader in his school days. He of course from his school days was fond of reading out-books. He read Milton and Homer when he was in the 2nd class of the Albert College though not with the eye of a critic, but for the interest of the story written therein. He also read Scott, Lytton, Dickens, etc. He was specially fond of reading the writings and lectures of Minister Keshub Chunder Sen, of which I have written elsewhere. He never stuffed his brain with academic lore, but what he read he assimilated. His was an original mind as may be seen from his writings and speeches that have been published. I regret also with Principal James who has written a preface to his works, that there are not more of the kind to be given to the public. There are men who read and read, and stuff their minds with the accumulated knowledge of centuries; but have not the power to assimilate them properly as to enlighten the

world. Such intellectual giants come to very little good of the world. But he, who assimilates and makes his own the various lores ancient or modern and can present them in an intelligible form for the good of the public, does indeed a yeoman's service in the cause of the furtherance of wisdom. Such a mind was Benoyendra's, what he read he made his own. If we only eat and eat and stuff and burden our stomach with food without the power of digestion and assimilation then such gormands do not grow healthy but they suffer from various ills that flesh is heir to, for the food if not properly digested and assimilated does not enrich the blood or strengthen the muscles or give tone to the nerves. Such is also the case with mere book-worms, they fill their minds with various kinds of knowledge but they do not help to form their own characters neither have they any independent principles or opinions. Such sort of learning I should consider as useless, for all learning is only a means to an end. He read philosophy to strengthen his own faith, he read history to know about the great men of the world and to study the causes of the rise, progress and decline of nations. History was sacred to him for in every event of the world, he saw the finger of Providence. He read poetry to study the real art of the poet and to enter into the hidden meaning of the poets. It is not possible for any one to study poetry to any good who has no ears for the music, and the true sentiments of poetry, that lie in every line of a true poet for there is genuine greatness in a true poet and he is in no way inferior to other hero souls of the world. He is also a seer and a prophet. He read all the greatest authors of celebrity critically and minutely. In prose his favourite authors were Carlyle, Emerson and Ruskin, and in early age he read Channing and Theodore Parker. His favourite poets

were Tennyson, and Browning and Dante. He had the true soul of a poet, so he could appreciate the real art though he himself never wrote poetry. A poet alone can understand a poet and appreciate him. Here I shall give an anecdote from Tennyson's life. Once Mr. Gladstone dined with his college friend, the poet Laureate. After dinner the poet read his melodrama *Maud* to the Prime Minister for entertainment. Hearing it read by the poet himself, the Prime Minister said "When I first read it I understood it in another light but now hearing it read by you I understand it quite differently. I now see that its meaning is quite the opposite to what I understood first." I do not remember of course the exact language used by the Premier, neither have I the volume with me to quote it aright, so I have reproduced it in my own way. Then the poet said, "One can understand poetry in the proportion to the poetic sentiments in him. The more a man's heart is filled with poetic sentiments the more he will be able to understand the meaning that lies hidden in every line of a true poet." My friend too also believed in it. The lurid glare of a Dante, the Cathedral music of a Milton, the sweet warbling notes of a Shelley, the stormy indignation of a Byron, the deep metaphysics of Wordsworth, the etherial music of Tennyson, nothing came amiss to him. He had an ear for every kind of poetry of course. He admired Shakespeare as the greatest of all the poets and artists ever born in any country or in any age. I do not know whether he studied critically all the dramas of Shakespeare, but he read many of them critically and was master of them, though he was of course not a Shakespearian scholar in the real sense of the term. In his later days, the writings and scriptures of the ancient sages of India attracted his attention as may very well

be seen from his lectures on *Upanishads*. He also read the *Gita* and was struck with admiration at the subtle reasoning of *Sree Krishna* to persuade *Arjuna* to fight. I am not of course competent to pass any remarks on it but the merit of *Gita* has already been exhaustively dilated on by the best authorities on it. All that I mean to write here is this that Benoyendra studied it, and derived a great benefit from its study and was also able to give to the public some version of it to elucidate its philosophy to a great extent, thus showing his genius to receive instruction with the modesty of a student from all the masters of the world, Western and Oriental. Before entering upon any criticism of the writings and utterances left by him, I would advise my readers to read the preface written by Principal James of the Presidency College and the very few words he has written about him are enough to throw light on the true greatness of the Professor and his position as an educationist and preacher and the need of such men at the present time for the proper training and education of our young men. Here I am tempted to quote a few words from Principal James first. They will be found remarkable for just that "assimilation of what is best in western culture which is the hope of the new education; while at the same time there is discernible in them a peculiar quality which comes by inheritance from the ancient spirit of India and distinguishes their standpoint from that of the thinkers who belong wholly to the west." I have elsewhere mentioned that his genius was oriental and he was always true to his national instinct though well-versed in all the modern thoughts of the west and an ardent admirer of what is best in European culture. The first in the series is "The Apology of Socrates." "It is a strikingly original and illuminating study of the

Apology of Socrates," as writes Principal James. He has viewed the Apology of Socrates from higher standpoint. He felt within himself the true spirit of love for which Socrates suffered the Martyrdom. Apart from his exhaustive knowledge of historical facts and figures, there is something in these pages which unmistakably proves that how the spirit of Socrates seemed to have risen before him with all the glory of a martyr for the love he bore to his misguided countrymen. How eloquently he speaks of it and then the *pathos* of the tragedy deepens a hundredfold when the doom of the martyr comes as a return for love—the purest love, ceaseless untiring labour and service, anxious and ever watchful with the tenderness of a mother—rewarded with the bitter cup of poison.

Socrates fully understood and realised the element of infinite mystery in all things. Every subject of study has within it infinite depths which is not possible to be exhausted during the course of a single life. Hence Newton said, "I am only picking up pebbles on the shores, while the great ocean of truth lies unexplored before me." Or as Socrates said, "Let me know that I know nothing." So, no one whether a politician or a mechanic or a poet must be centred in his particular profession or art, but must be a whole man. This test may be applied to every one, as for example, a lawyer to be successful must not be versed only in his technicalities of law, but must widen his sympathy so as to understand different sorts of men and characters. A doctor must not only study his Anatomy or Therapeutics but must be a whole man, to understand human nature thoroughly, the disposition, the habit, the peculiar tendency of his patient to treat him successfully. In short we must widen our sympathies and try to penetrate

the veil of mystery that surrounds the creation to be a full man.

The second in the series is Alfred Tennyson (The man and the poet). Tennyson was one of Benoy's favourite poets and the only poet largely studied by Indian students for his broad sentiments which men of all nationality may appreciate. He writes thus, when speaking of the wide popularity of Tennyson among Indian students, "Of all the English poets dead or living, I believe Tennyson is the one who next to Shakespeare, is the most widely known to Indian students—his voice is so musically human, his words seem to be the echoes of what in moments of chastening elevation, we should value so much to find in the depths of our own souls." Who will not bear testimony to the influence of "*In Memoriam*," when pressed down by the overwhelming pressure of sorrow or bereft of the darling of his heart. He reads it and is transformed into the highest, purest and elevated atmospheres where sorrow becomes divine. Tennyson was a human being, so he had enough share of sorrows and trials of this world. From the death of his darling child and bosom friend to the chill penury, all these he had to undergo, but inspite of all these, like most men, he did not loose faith in God or turn a cynic as many others would have done when placed in similar circumstances.

Susceptible to the extreme, conscious of his own failings, he never lost sight of the Eternal, All Merciful Father, and this welled forth as from a fountain his melodious rapture and divine sympathy for all. Then he goes on to describe very eloquently and pathetically the end of the poet. His study of the Poet Laureate shows how he made his writings his own and how he realised within him the very spirit of the poet. In his

lecture on Tennyson's "*In Memoriam*" he has tried to show very eloquently and feelingly the value of "*In Memoriam*." He then writes, "The value of his poetry lies in love, hope and faith—nay in the characteristic tone and music of the love, hope and faith that vibrates through the many stringed lyre of his poetry." The next in the poem is the communion with the Dead. True communion naturally follows the liberation of the spirit. This is shown by my friend from quotations from three different poets, namely Shelly, Tennyson and Rabindranath. With Shelly, it means the merging of the soul in Nature, in the second it is a personal loving intelligence which is the eternal home of the Spirit, with third it means the glorification of the Spirit—in a fusion of the human with the Divine in which state the soul is one with God and Nature.

The next in the series is Tennyson's "Idyll of the Holy Grail." This is perhaps the most original of the literary contributions, for in it he differs in his opinion with the most famous critics of Tennyson such as Stopford Brook and Hutton. Tennyson here depicts a passion in quest of an ideal and not a morbid yearning for signs and wonders which is of course an evil. What is man without an ideal, the craving for an ideal, the passing for what we ought to have is not a morbid sensibility but the highest and noblest and gravest aspiration that can fire humanity. It is for this ideal that martyrs have shed their precious blood smilingly. It is for this ideal that the poets have poured forth their divine rapture in melodious strain, it is for this ideal only that a man lives, moves and has his being. This is also the most spiritual of his poems as the poet himself writes "The Holy Grail is one of the most imaginative of my poems. I have expressed there my strong feeling as to the reality of the Unseen. There



are moments when the flesh is nothing to me, when I feel the flesh to be the vision, God and the Spiritual the only real and true. Depend upon it the spiritual is the real. It belongs to one more than the hand and the foot." Such was the poet's conviction of the spiritual in man, the only reality that we know, for the body is of the earth earthy and will soon mix with the five elements, but the soul, the mind, the ego, is eternal transcending the limit of the ephemeral existence, and rising in triumph to the abode of the Eternal, there to remain for ever and ever in the bosom of the Eternal Spirit in the enjoyment of the companionship of all the blessed souls of saints and sages. The life of my friend has been a continual hankering after the realisation of the ideal: hence the love of Tennyson's Poetry, hence the original elucidation of the allegory of the Holy Grail. I have no pretension to literary merit, hence I do not wish to dilate at more length upon this. Suffice it to say that my friend fully realised that life is meaningless without an ideal, that the pursuit after an ideal gives a significance to spiritual life and immortality.

I would pass over in silence his next paper on "Self-Concealment of Genius in Literature" although it shows his highest flight of imagination and sets off his great literary merit almost to perfection. It also shows his highest power of literary criticism and if he devoted his whole life to literary culture alone, he would have risen to a giddy height and would have been one of the greatest critics the world has ever produced. The secret of his success in his literary undertaking is not so much his depth of learning, but his deep insight and the power to grasp the true meaning, lay bare in clear, eloquent language his own ideas on the subject he handled. No hazy conception, no half-hearted attempts, but he brought

to bear upon his whole genius earnestly and sincerely to make clear his ideas to his audience whether as a lecturer or as a teacher in his college. In his lecture on the elements of "Practical Characterization in the *Geeta*" he draws a distinct line of demarcation between *Geeta* and other ethics or metaphysics. The comparison he has instituted between Arjun and Shakespeare's Hamlet is indeed very nice and truly original. Hamlet is called upon to be the Minister of Justice to the murderer of his father—his uncle and usurper, but he shrinks from that for by doing so he would expose the shame of his own mother, so also Arjun shrinks to fight thinking that he would kill his own relatives though they were traitors and usurpers. In Hamlet's case there is a complete paralysis of the will resulting as from a fatal electric shock to the tenderest susceptibility of his nature, but in Arjun it is something more. Here I am tempted to quote a few lines "In Hamlet it is only a wounding of the susceptibilities, a self-conscious temperament of doubt that paralyses the will. In Arjun it is that and also a moral conviction that what he was going to do would be positively wrong. It suddenly flashes upon his mind that this fratricidal, patricidal war is an unnatural monstrous crime, from which he shrinks as from a deadly viper with all the genuine repulsion and horror of which his nature is capable of." Then again he goes on to compare the feeling of the repulsion of Arjun to a just war with the feeling of the repulsion Macbeth felt when on the eve of committing a most dastardly and treacherous murder.

The next in the series is the "Student Life and the Stage." Principal James writes thus of the above lecture: "The varied gifts, the real insight, the breadth of culture of the writer are, best of all, displayed, I think in the

essay "On Student life and the Stage." If I had to take a single example, it might be passages on pages 164 and 165 which express with eloquence and illustrate in a very freshly vigorous way the essential nature of the poet's dramatic insight. Not less remarkable for grasp and power is the analysis of the conditions of national revival productive of the drama with its fearless application to modern Bengal." He strongly repudiates the present condition and management of theatres in Bengal specially alluding to the flippant satyres and caricatures in bad taste produced in native stages and then he speaks very fearlessly and strongly against the practice of grasping religion and religious personalities on the stage the whole atmosphere of which is saturated with gross vice and unpardonable immorality. When *Chaitanya Lila* was first brought on the stage of the Star Theatre, the house was full to suffocation for many successive nights, and it was the topic of the day. Men thought of a great religious upheaval through the performance of the religious drama. My friend was then in the 2nd year class and one of our friends persuaded him to go and see the play assuring that he would be highly gratified hearing the songs and the *sankirtan* which nearly maddens the hearers with a sense of ecstasy and overflow of religious sentiments. So the stream of *Bhakti* flows in the stage at the chanting of the sacred name of *Hari*. Benoy was tempted to go and see the play. This was the first and the last time he visited the native public theatre. But what he felt there was a strong feeling of repulsion as he has described it in his essay, and he was sorry ever afterwards that he came to a place which was nothing else but a hot-bed of pollution and vice. We talk of national improvement through the medium of the stage for has not the stage produced the immortal Shakespeare, is there

not an array of famous dramatists produced through the agency of the stage? Verily it is so, but there is little prospect of improvement of ours in that direction unless the moral atmosphere of the stage is improved and raised to a higher platform. The last, though not the least, in the series is Maharshi Debendranath Tagore, a lecture delivered at the hall of the Calcutta University Institute on the 27th Feb. 1905. Here he is in his element, and very eloquently sets off the characteristics and the genuine greatness of the greatest of the modern saints. Speaking of his charity he says "Wonderful was the charity of Debendranath Tagore. Where the impulse came it filled his heart, and lifted him above the consideration of worldly prudence, and then he goes on to cite an incident from his life, which shows what a large generous heart he possessed, what sympathy in the distress of others he felt, how his impulse raised him above all worldly prudence. The illustration is certainly a great object lesson to all the scions of rich family of this country who have riches enough to squander in frivolous pursuits, but who have nothing to spare to relieve the distress of suffering brother men in want and penury. Maharsi Debendranath Tagore has left behind him an ideal of spiritual culture in these days of gross materialism and scepticism, which ought to guide our countrymen in the path of spirituality which is the heir-loom of every man born in Indian soil pre-eminently famous for highest spiritual culture. I shall conclude this by quoting his concluding lines "Our society will have to choose, in fact being every moment called upon to choose the directions that it will take in its future development. You, my young friends, also will have to choose, we are every moment being called upon to choose, every one for him-

self, what should be your ideals in your own career. Shall we say whether in imitation of the west or not I do not know that in our social and individual ideas, the contemplative life will have no place at all? If we are not prepared to do that, if we want to maintain in our practical life as well as in our speeches that the East has a special ideal of its own and its special place and function in the development of the civilisation of the future will be determined in the light of that ideal, the life of Maharsi Debendra Nath Tagore can never cease to be of interest to the people and to the students of India." It is but natural that the striking personality of such a saint will have a fascination for my friend which no language can adequately describe. He stands before him as an ideal reminding us of the ancient sages and saints of India sitting on the silent eternal snow-clad tops of the Himalaya merged in deep communion with the transcendent and immanent Spirit. Maharshi Debendra Nath Tagore was a typical Indian of classic time whose voice reaches even today through the silence and darkness of so many centuries and whose glorious spirit with the halo of spiritual glory guides us like pillars of clouds by day and pillars of fire by night. In this connection, I shall mention another incident—once a friend of mine when Benoy was reading in College, delivered a lecture on the "three leaders of the Brahmo Somaj" and Benoy was invited to preside on the occasion. On rising to speak he summed up very beautifully the virtues of the three leaders describing the first Raja Rammohan Roy as *Satyam* (Truth), Debendranath as *Sivam* (Good) and the last though not the least Keshub Chunder as *Sundaram* (Beautiful). Raja Rammohan Roy brought the truth first, Debendranath Tagore gave it life, and the last though not the least who was Benoy's idea made it beautiful. This

was indeed a very beautiful summing up in few words of the positions of three such leaders of the Brahmo Somaj for a student of the first year class.

A memorial meeting was called by the British Indian Association in the Town Hall of Calcutta after the death of the Maharshi and Benoy was invited to support a resolution as representative of the Church of the New Dispensation. Of all the speakers who took part on the occasion his was perhaps the most feeling and sincere speech, for he spoke what he felt and he yielded to none in his veneration for the great departed Maharshi.

I shall now try to write a few lines on his lectures on the "Intellectual Ideal." It is an original enterprise, for he has tried and most successfully in giving a modern interpretation of the philosophy of the *Upanishads*. He approaches the subject with all the diffidence of an humble student and not as a teacher. He then writes "There is no freedom like the freedom of humility, no privilege like the privilege of reverence and to him who comes as an earnest searcher in the spirit of true humility and reverence, nature has no secrets that she will not unveil, and even the venerable Rishis may deign to speak out of the depths filled and sanctified by the stillness of ages?" Though well-versed in all the metaphysical lore of the West, beginning from Socrates and Plato to Kant and Hegel, he was true to his national instinct and dived deep into the vast ocean of the philosophy of the East and brought forth the richest pearls that is contained therein. I am glad to say that we are now no longer indifferent to the treasures of learning of our own country. What mines of glorious research in every department of knowledge lie open before us, what a vast prospect there is for every researcher into the field of metaphysics, science and literature left behind by the

ancient sages and savants of the East. I am not of course entitled to write on these things, for I confess to my very shame that I know little of the writings of our ancient *Rishis*. Benoyendra's style of writing is always remarkable for its clearness, perspicuity and the character of the writer seems to be recorded in every sentence he wrote or uttered, out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh. This is true to the very letter in case of my friend. He wrote and spoke what he felt in his inward self. The very soul of a philosopher, a poet and a pure minded saint are combined in him in sweet harmony. There is a sustained grandeur of eloquence throughout everything he has written or uttered. The charms of nature, the majesty of man, the infinite loveliness of truth and virtue were not hidden from him. The mystic utterances and revelations of the East, the philosophy of the West, as handed down from Socrates, Plato downwards to the transcendentalism of Germany were no sealed book to him. He knew very well how to admire and appreciate the martyrdom of a Socrates, the true poetic spirituality of a Tennyson, the deep fervour of devotion, charity and asceticism of Maharsi Debendranath Tagore. His whole soul communed with the mighty spirits of the ancient time and he seemed to have walked in the footsteps of the hero souls of antiquity. There was in him something that cannot die, the beauty and earnestness of soul, that spirit of humanity, of love and wisdom, above all the excellence of the inmost nature which alone confers immortality on men and their teachings.

He had great oratorical powers, but unfortunately he did not possess the loud voice of an orator. This power of oratory flashed forth in his early extempore lectures when he was a mere school boy.

He was a born orator. He possessed a marvellous power of speaking with a fluency which is very rarely seen. His grand and sublime imagery, his marvellous eloquence, his command over a foreign tongue, his mastery of the subject he handled, must give him a pre-eminent rank in the galaxy of speakers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. There was nothing artificial or affected in his delivery, but he spoke with a genuine feeling and sincere conviction which put such force to all his writings and utterances. His letters were samples of epistolary style sparkling with genial wit and humour. He wrote in his letters what he felt.

He was a lover of nature from his very infancy. The soul of a poet shines forth in all his writings and utterances. A tender child like simplicity, a heart brimful of the milk of human kindness, a soul in sympathy with entire humanity, a spiritual fire throbbing and pulsating through his entire being cannot but be susceptible to the various beauties of Creation. Lost in wonder and admiration at the sublime aspect of Nature in all her vicissitudes his soul penetrated the veil of Nature and like Wordsworth saw in everything a mighty Spirit, a great all-absorbing Force hidden behind the huge machinery of nature which keeps her agoing. His frequent river trips in boats over the Ganges show how he enjoyed and drank in the beauties that surrounded the universe far away from the bustle and tumult of the monster of a city like Calcutta. He would steal away into the suburbs to enjoy the stilness and calmness that reign around in the bewitching hours of twilight. He would watch the stars appearing one by one in the bosom of the infinite heaven. Once in his travels he was enchanted seeing the scenery of *Haridwar*. It is indeed a very romantic place surrounded by hills and the sacred river flowing through them. Standing by the side of the



stream, when the full moon was shining above, the rays of the moon glistening from out of the depths of the river like so many pillars of fire, he really felt himself blessed and wrote a very beautiful letter to Mohit Chunder to the effect. I do not exactly remember the wordings of the letter but it began something like this, "If a man ever felt himself blessed seeing the charms of nature, it must be in a place like this, standing by the side of the murmuring stream with the rays of the full moon overhead, glistening from out of the depths of the river. Nature to him was not an inert, inanimate matter but a mysterious presence to be felt and communed with. The infinite night with her solemn aspect, the sweet approach of evening twilight were full of meaning for him. The beauty of sunrise and the glory of sunset struck the poetic chord of his soul very sublimely. He loved the green earth with her streams and forest, her eternal hills, her flowery trees and the infinite azure above and loved her with a passion, in all her vicissitudes of light and shade, his spirit revelled in her grandeur and charms, expanded like the breeze over wood and lawn, over glade and valleys blowing and spreading fragrant odours. He had an eye for the beautiful and sublime in nature and lost in the midst of the eternal harmony of nature, his spirit would soar aloft into the infinite azure of eternity and would lose itself in holy communion with the pervading Spirit immanent in nature. He lived only for the glorification of the Spirit in him. So whether studying the lives of the saints and sages, whether diving into the depth of metaphysics or surrounded by the charms of nature, the sole object of his life was to realise God, in his inmost soul and to be always in touch with Him. It is, in fact, the bloom and perfume, the purest effluence of a deep, fine, and loving nature, a nature in harmony with itself and the whole universe reconciled

to the world and its contradiction, nay finding in it new elements of beauty and goodness.

His description of the falls of Niagara in his "Pilgrim", a journal published by him during his tour in the West is full of poetry. He writes, "that it is a place which one would like to visit in sunlight and moonlight and commune with the spirit that fills the place with awful and sublime grandeur and be lost in the bosom of the Infinite." Nature with her inexhaustible store of knowledge was always present to him. To him nature had new messages to deliver, new truths to reveal, new depths to open. Have the ancient Himalayas clad in mists and eternal snows no new message to deliver now that the *Rishis* are silent in their graves? Has the vast ocean ever filled to the brim—the mirror in which the Almighty's form glances itself in tempest or in calm, no new truths to reveal, have the beautiful feathered creatures deluging the earth and heaven with their sweet melodies, no new depth of thought to reveal? Surely to a true poet nature is always full of meanings and suggestions. To him there were teachings and sermons in murmuring rivers and rocks and stones. A soul ever so filled with the presence of the Infinite Spirit must idolise nature and be immersed in the unspeakable loveliness and beauty that surround him on all sides.

The occasion of his visit to Europe is known to all who take an interest in him, but I am sorry to acknowledge my ignorance regarding its details. But here I must mention one thing which I remember, *viz.*, a farewell dinner given in his honour by my poor self at my residence 14, Mussulmanpara Lane. I had a custom to gather together my early friends from time to time and I made use of this occasion to gather all my friends together to wish Godspeed to one who was dear to us

all and whom we loved and regarded for his many virtues. There were present on the occasion Babu Promatho Lall Sen, Mohit Chunder Sen, Benoyendra, Satyendra, Debendranath Bose, Jogendranath Laha, Suresh Chunder Dutt and one or two more. I do not remember who conducted the service, but I remember the touching prayer suitable to the occasion offered by Benoyendra the purport of which is given below :

“O Lord, because we learned to pray to Thee from our earliest infancy, therefore, it is that Thou hast not left us altogether but hast ever showed Thine love and benediction on us. May we ever walk in Thy path, and follow Thine light, may we never lose our path in the wilderness of the world. May Thine blessings attend us, wherever we may be and whatever may be our vocation in life. Though vast expanse of seas and lands, separate us may our hearts be ever united in Thee.”

Thus he prayed like his own dear self of yore and all our hearts beat in unison. It was a merry evening we passed and the memory of it is yet fresh in my mind. He was always very tender of heart. There was no harsh or rude element in him. The tiniest creature alive was an object of tender interest to him. He retained this tenderness throughout his life. As a boy he was always keenly alive to the sufferings of others and he never was wantonly cruel to the meanest animals even. Once in his infancy he went to see a sacrifice of goats in a neighbouring house on the occasion of Durga Puja. He was sitting with some other of his companions when a goat was brought to the place of sacrifice. The sight of the poor creature so moved him that he cried that it would be better if they would leave the goat and sacrifice him

in its stead. Here speaks the soul of a *Sakya Muni*. A tender child, not even perhaps in his teens, wished to sacrifice his life to save a poor goat. This shows what a noble and tender soul he had, how keenly alive to the sufferings of others and how ready to give his life to relieve the pain of others.

He loved truth for its own sake from his very dawn of consciousness. Clear your mind of Cant was his emphatic precept and he fearlessly conformed to it. I have never in my life heard him speak a lie even in jest. He always hated lies. If his whole life were examined with a microscope by friend or foe, then even no lie would be found in him. One day in the evening sitting on one of the stairs of the Sanskrit College with him alone, we talked on various subjects. The tank lay in calm repose before us, innumerable stars flashed overhead like so many shining diamonds. In those days it was a credit to boys to write good English as now even. I knew of course that he was the best writer amongst us. Yet to try him I asked him, "Who do you think can write the best English in our class." He tried first to evade the question, but I was not to be easily deterred. I pressed him again and again, he first of all mentioned one or two names who I knew could write very good English, but I pressed him to name the best writer of us, till at last goaded to the extreme, yet not being able to tell what he did not believe to be the truth he said most reluctantly of course that he thought his own style of writing to be the best. Then he apologised saying that this was pure and simple egotism and that he might be mistaken. He then mildly rebuked me for having forced him to give his opinion on a matter so delicate for it concerned his own self. This shows that though he was extremely modest, yet his love of truth overcame his modesty and

that he valued truth above all and under no circumstances would he speak what he knew to be false. There were various other occasions when he had the moral courage to speak out the truth however unwillingly. He thought that it was better to appear to others as an egotist and a pedant than to speak a lie. None was more modest than him, but with all his modesty and shyness of disposition he never feared to give out the truth at any cost or sacrifice.

He was very shy from his infancy. He felt himself at home when with his friends or associates whom he knew well and with whom he daily mixed, but before an outsider he was always afraid to open his mouth and tried his best to fly away from the place.

Once when reading in the 2nd or 3rd class, he went to the house of Babu Jogendranath Laha. He was often in the habit of coming to him. There was present on that day a friend of Jogen's elder brother, who knew Benoy. Jogen brought Benoy before him at his request and Benoy coming to his presence stood blushing like a young girl with his face bent down. Thus he stood for a few minutes without being able to speak a word or without trying to look up. He cut indeed a very pathetic figure when at last the gentleman laughed aloud at his unique shyness and said, "তুমি যে মেয়ে মাহিষের বেহন্দ বলে হে" you are more shy than a woman. At the remark, Benoy ran away at once from Jogen's house with all the speed of his legs. This shyness continued for many years till at last, when called upon in the field of action this left him to a great extent. But though so very shy, yet he was bold when he had to perform a duty. Then he never feared strangers and was never in awe of any body. Though very shy and modest, though ever

reluctant to come out before strangers yet when occasion required he was very brave and forward. He was never afraid to speak out his convictions, never afraid of any consequences, when he was called upon to perform any duty however difficult or delicate. To speak the truth always, to do what one thinks his duty in the teeth of severe objection, is moral courage indeed, and my friend always possessed that great virtue. He never shrank from performing a duty however painful it might be.

One day we were coming to the College Square, from Kansaripara and near Thanthania, there was a grog shop. It was a Sunday. One *Sahib* in rags came before us and begged something for a drink in the grog shop. Benoy took him by the hands and lectured to him for nearly a quarter of an hour. The purport of which was that did he not feel shame to beg for a drink on the Sabbath day, being a Christian. "You are a Christian, and are you not ashamed to beg for drinking on a Sabbath day." Being thus lectured the gentleman beat a hasty retreat, thinking that he had caught a Tartar. This shows that with all his shyness he was ever ready to speak out and raise his voice of dissent whenever occasion required and never deviated from his principle.

He was always very fond of music. As he had an eye for beauty so he had an ear for music. Though he had no voice to sing yet he always sang to himself and would always like to hear sweet songs.

He was always a man of strict principles and never for any one occasion acted against them. Once a friend of mine requested me to know the marks his son-in-law had secured in History in B.A. I of course told him that Benoy would never tell it. But he requested me again and again to know if possible whether he had passed or not for his future prospect greatly depended on his success

in the examination. I went to him and asked him if he would tell me whether a certain examinee had passed in History or not. He told me "I know that almost all the examiners give out marks and they do not strictly follow the rules, but can you ask me to go against the rule. My father once asked me what marks Deben (his fifth brother) had got in history, but I did not tell him even, for I think it my duty to abide always by the rule, whatever work I do." I of course apologised for requesting him to act against his principle. There were several instances in which he never deviated an inch from his principles.

Once a friend of mine Babu Suresh Ch. Dutt asked him what relation he would like to maintain with his family. He readily replied "I would like first of all to educate all my brothers in the line they would choose to adopt. Then when they will be fairly established and would be able to live independently they would have free choice to live jointly or separately, and as for my parents they would also be free to live with whom they would prefer, and as for me I shall be only too glad to take their charge, so long they would be willing enough to live with me." This bespeaks a very liberal and generous heart, and a consideration for the true welfare of the family. He was always a loving and dutiful son, the most kind and affectionate to his brothers and sisters and had always at heart their welfare both temporal and spiritual.

He always revered his superiors especially his teachers. He always behaved politely and respectfully with those teachers of the Albert School who taught him in his school days. One day when he was living at Bhowani Charan Dutt Lane, being appointed in the Presidency College, Babu Priya Nath Bhattacharjee, an

old teacher of the Albert School, went to see him. He was not in the house. He had not then come back from College. Priya Babu waited a few minutes when Benoy came he bowed down to him with due reverence. The gentleman asked him to go inside and change his clothes, saying that he would wait. But Benoy would not hear it. He made him sit down, while he stood in his office-clothes, talked with him on various subjects for more than half an hour. Then at last Priya Babu rose to go and he accompanied him to the door and then went inside to change his clothes and rest after the fatiguing labour of the college. This shows how he respected his teachers and superiors and how polite and meek he was though holding a high position. Benoy regularly observed his birth-days. On the day Divine Service was held in his house, and he gave a letter to all his friends separately. The contents of the letters were also different

He grew like other children but from his infancy there were signs of wonders which generally attend those who are destined to leave their impressions on the sands of time never to be effaced by the ravages of time which changes, kills and destroys everything. Everything in this world is destined to change and die but the lives of hero souls ever remain fresh in the hearts of men for all generations to come. Dynasties pass away, kingdoms are swept away by the ravages of time but the glory attained by great men shines ever and ever with undying lustre.

Born in a Brahmo family, bred and brought up amidst surroundings most suitable for spiritual culture, Benoy's early life was spent in uninterrupted tranquility like a pure crystal stream unruffled by eddies and whirls that too often make havocs of lives.



From his early childhood he was given to contemplation in solitude and he always tried the obstinate questionings that rise naturally to a soul bent on solving the great problems of life and death. But though he indulged in serious thoughts he was never sad or morose, but he was fond of all sorts of play and sports that help to form a healthy mind in a healthy body—*Mens sana in corpora sano*.

Thus grew up a great soul as a tall, towering personality which charmed and attracted all who came in contact with him. In his childhood and his youth he was thin and but when he grew up to be a man he was rather not short of stature. In his manhood he gained in flesh and looked stouter. His face was always cheerful and smiling.

The great object of his life was the amalgamation of the East and the West. The ideal of a liberal religion can never be realised unless the West meets the East half-way and thus forms a fellowship which is the mission of Keshub Chunder Sen's New Dispensation.

The New Dispensation is not a separate creed but its sole aim is the fusion of the East and the West. So he asks "Will the East and the West ever understand each other?" Europe with all her scientific culture, material advancement has yet to learn from Asia the deep spirituality without which no man or nation can be perfect.

The East with all her depth of spirituality and religious culture, her prophets, sages, and seers must learn from Europe the fundamental truth that are being discovered by scientific culture. The soul of the East cries to the soul of the West and the spirit of the West cries to the East. When these cries are responded, when the two understand each other then and then only will come

that perfection for which humanity seeks, then and then only will the eternal hankering of the two be satisfied and the kingdom of Heaven for which have laboured the greatest souls of the world since the dawn of creation, will be realised. It is not the dream of an idealist, it is not speculation philosophy but it is as certain as the sun shines that there will come a time when the East and the West will shake hands with each other on a common platform ushering the dawn of New Heaven on earth and when all shall sing in sweet tone like the angels of Heaven "Thy Kingdom come."

Such was the ideal my friend sought and tried his utmost in his life, so that the continents might understand each other, and supply their respective deficiencies by mutual help.

In the year 1905, he went to attend the International Congress of Liberal Religions held in Geneva as a delegate from the Brahmo Somaj. He was an attractive figure in that great assembly where gathered all the savants of the world to discuss the views of liberal religion. Though no detailed record of his doings there are to be found yet it is known to all that he created a sensation there and people heard him with love and regard, lent him their hands of fellowship as one among themselves who have come from the far East in their midst with advanced idea of liberal religion to help them in their great work.

From thence he was invited to England where his mellow voice with all the power of a great orator held his audience spell-bound. His flowery language, beautiful imagery, depths of thought and above all his great personality won for him applause and he was received with great regard wherever he went. From England he proceeded to America where also he was universally

praised and applauded for his deep scholarship, his high power of oratory and above all his religious enthusiasm and his earnestness to teach others what he believed to be the truth.

He has recorded the experience of his visit to Europe and America in a pamphlet called "The Pilgrim."

He was indeed a pilgrim to distant Christian land in the West and he went not as a teacher but as a student to study Christian life. He presided over the Theistic Conference held in Lahore in the year 1909. The address he delivered was a splendid one and as Lala Kasiram remarks worthy of the late Rev. Protap Chandra Mozoomdar. It was an extempore oration and it held his audience spell-bound. It showed a depth of learning, and spiritual insight, and a mastery over the problems that puzzle many a deep thinker and theologian of all ages and of all lands.

We are sorry however to mention here that his speech which he delivered extempore was never reported. He acted for sometime as University Inspector of Colleges and in that capacity he did much good to the many private colleges he visited. His affable manners, his friendly advice, his intellectual attainments, above all his sweet personality endeared him to all. It will not be perhaps out of place here to write a few words about the services he rendered to the Church to which he belonged. He served the Church of the New Dispensation with a whole heart, left no stone unturned to make its principles circulate over the length and breadth of the whole habitable globe. He tried for the improvement of the moral status of the Church by bringing up young men in the path of virtue and rectitude. He saw with a deep sorrowful heart the moral deterioration of the Church and tried his heart and soul for its improvement.

He preached, he prayed, he laboured hard to bring all the scattered flock of the Church in its fold and by the lofty example of his life showed them the way. It is a matter of deep regret that he did not live some years more to complete his work in the Church which he had left unfinished.

We learn a great lesson not only from the lives of great men, but also from the manner in which they met death. The greatest, sublimest and the grandest lesson is learnt from the death of Jesus Christ. Our souls are thrilled with awe and veneration when we imagine the Cross, the figure on it with upturned eyes offering up a prayer the equal of which has not yet been uttered by any man of the world in any ages. The severe torture, the excruciating pain, the inhuman character of the instrument of torture will ever be remembered by all.

In our time we have heard of the sufferings of Keshub Chunder on his death bed, what excruciating pain and terrible agony he suffered night and day. But he never lost his faith in God in the midst of his sufferings rather his faith increased hundred times under the terrible ordeal. We all have to hear the cries of life in some form or other but the terrible trial from which some of these great souls mentioned above emerged resplendent gives us an insight of the spiritual kingdom and intensifies our faith in God. Both in their life and death they teach us spiritual lessons never to be forgotten.

Such is also the lesson which the death of Benoyendra teaches to those who care to study his life. His night and day suffering, his great agony he bore with superhuman patience. And whence may I ask comes such patience and fortitude as to be serene and cheerful under such suffering? It is faith and faith only that sustain the hero souls in the time of greatest trials.

By faith, like genius, they come out of these ordeals triumphant and resplendent like the Phoenix bird. His death was as beautiful as his life and the lesson he has taught the world by his death will be written in characters of gold in every heart who had the good fortune to watch by his bedside during the period of his long and prolonged illness. It is needless here to mention that his bedside was watched with great concern and anxiety by all his friends and relations. I may here mention that his youngest brother Dharendra (now a pleader of the Alipur Bench) watched him night and day during his illness and tended him with great care and affection. His death therefore is an irreparable loss to the Church for whose improvement he consecrated his whole life. Whether as a student of College, whether as a Professor of College, he never forgot his Church for whose glorification he lived, moved and had his being. He lived up to the ideal of the New Dispensation and followed in the footsteps of the leader Keshub Chunder Sen whom he idolised.

Benoy always observed the law of health and tried to keep himself healthy though he was not very strong. From his very early age when a school student, he suffered from acidity. He would often vomit after his morning meal. In his advanced age he did not much complain of the disease, and he took long walks regularly in the evening. I now and then accompanied him in his walks when he would talk with me of his experiences in England and America and compare our society with theirs. His ideas as I have written elsewhere were very clear and concise and he was master of the subject he would talk of. One day, when walking alone near the Peel's statue, a European constable asked him why he was loitering near Peel's statue. He told him he was.

taking his evening walk, but the functionary would not hear it and asked him to come with him to the Thana. Benoy of course told him that he would suffer for it, if he would take him to the Thana. But as the man was not in his proper senses he took him in a gharry to the Fenwick Bazar Thana, where the Inspector received him very respectfully and understanding the mistake made by the policeman in his drunken state said, "That is not the first time that the man has committed such a blunder in his tipsy condition and he will surely lose his post this time." He then scolded him but the man repeated the same thing "I saw him loitering near Peel's statue." Benoy of course was obliged to go to the Lal Bazar Police the next day as the letter of the law required. The Deputy Commissioner of course apologised to him for the unnecessary trouble given him by the freak of a drunken man and would have dismissed the man then and there had not Benoy very magnanimously requested the Commissioner not to dismiss him for the trouble he had given him. He was always generous to all and never did any harm to any body. Though so very careful of his health, yet he was attacked by a fell disease which carried him off from our midst. How or when he contracted the disease is not of course known. It was some growth or cancer in the stomach. The character of a man, his faith and trust in God, is best testified in the fiery furnace of trial and tribulation. The excruciating agony of the disease, his night and day suffering did not lessen his trust in God, but he suffered heroically till the bitter end. The best doctors of the City attended him, but the disease baffled their skill. He felt a little better under Homœopathic treatment. At the time, one day our friend Babu Jogendranath Laha, who too had lately passed away from our midst and whose loss we few survivors of

a chosen band sincerely mourn, went to see him. Benoy told him, "I have got some relief by the new treatment. If there be no pain, and if I can digest what I eat, I shall be soon cured." But God ordered otherwise, his case grew worse till at last he was sent to Giridih for a change. The doctors hoped that at Giridih in the bosom of mother nature he would be all right. But he came back from Giridih a complete wreck of his former self, and with the little strength he had he got up to his room there to lie down till the end came. On the morning of 12th April, 1913 at about 2 a.m. when he expired he asked his nephew what time it was. Then he passed urine. His pulse was then sinking. Brother Satyendra gave him the last injection a few minutes before his death. Then came the most dreaded moment, when the spirit winged its flight to the mansion whence it came to be a temporary sojourner in this world of ours, amidst the heart-rending lamentation of all. The funeral procession was an imposing one. All the Professors of the Presidency College, all his friends and admirers and many eminent men, such as the late Sir Gurudas Banerjee, Sir Deva Prasad Sarvadhikary, Mr. H. Stephen, Rev. Mr. Urquharf, Dr. Chunilal Bose, the late Hon. Radha Ch. Pal and several others and students of all colleges followed the procession to the dismal burning ghat of Nimtala, where his earthly body was reduced to ashes. His ashes lie in the present family residence under a beautiful marble with many scriptural inscriptions on it.

Thus ended a great and noble career. That melody of life is silent for ever, the heavenly force that dwelled here victorious over so much earthly matters is here no longer. What solemn meaning lies in the word "end", as it peals mournfully through the soul, when a friend has passed away.

His memory is associated with everything. In the joyous morning with the sweet notes of birds, in the approach of sober evening when twilight deepens and the stars begin to appear one by one on the bosom of the infinite azure above, in the hush and solemn stillness of night we remember him. The sorrow for the dead is the only sorrow from which we refuse to be divorced. What mother would wish to forget his child that withered like a blossom in her arms, what wife would forget her dear companion of life, what friend would wish to forget his dear loving associate of childhood, though to remember may be painful. All now is closed, irrevocable, the week day man who was one of us has put on the garment of eternity and has become radiant and triumphant. Man dies but his spirit ever lives with us. In these days of unbelief and materialism the advent of such a soul, pure and spiritually minded must be indeed cheering. If any body would wish to see a man who learned to deny and defy what is false, yet believe and worship what is true, and working for the world and in the world kept himself unspotted from the world—let him look at the life of Benoyendranath Sen.

Rest, beloved of many hearts, rest in peace in the bosom of the beloved Mother to Whom you consecrated your life.

Thou art gone to a land of everlasting sunshine and peace, where there are no suffering, no pain, no sorrow and no parting.

Thy soul was like a star and dwelt apart far from the maddening crowd's ignoble strifes. Thy life flows in a crystal stream enriching all through which it flowed with verdant crops of luxuriant growth. Souls like you are sent to this earth with a high mission to elevate people from the mire of sins frequently, to hold before them a



lofty ideal and preach to them the gladsome tidings of the spiritual world to which we are all journeying.

I again repeat that in these days of gross materialism when the minds of men are led astray by thoughts of physical pleasure, when they are carried away by the feverish excitement of following a phantom which modern civilisation places before them in the shape of enjoyment of all sorts of luxuries brought within the reach of men by various scientific inventions of the modern age we have forgotten that we have a soul and we are ready to sell eternity to get a toy. Miserable fools! They do not know that enjoyment is not the be-all and end-all of life but there is a higher life and a superior sort of existence which make men angels on the face of the earth. Men like Benoyendra are indeed badly needed in this world to raise men up and to lead them onward and heavenward to the Infinite Eternity so that they may not be swallowed up by the roaring billows of the ocean of Time.

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## A DEED OF GIFT

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I, Surendra Nath Dutt, offer to the Nababidhan Trust, this biography of my friend the late Professor Benoyendra Nath Sen, as a free and unconditional gift.

SURENDRA NATH DUTT.

Witnesses :—

- (1) UPENDRA NATH DUTT.
- (2) BADAL CHANDRA BOSE.

10, MUSALMANPARA LANE,  
CALCUTTA,  
*4th August, 1928.*

## THE NABABIDHAN TRUST

The Nababidhan Trust undertook this work with faith and trust in God and in man. It hoped and trusted that the work of Love—service to the Church and to humanity—was sure to be accomplished. Now on completion of this biography, it bows down its head to the Merciful Providence. It acknowledges with sincere thanks the service rendered by Srijut Surendra Nath Dutt in writing out this biography and offering it to the Nababidhan Trust as a free and unconditional gift, and expresses its gratitude to all others who helped him in the making of the same.

From its readers, I crave for pardon for all faults and blemishes contained therein, as Benoyendra Nath's younger brother,

SATYENDRA NATH SEN,  
*Hony. Secretary.*

28, NEW ROAD, ALIPORE,  
CALCUTTA,  
15th August, 1928.





